CHAPTER – IV
WEIGHMENT POLICY

I Rationale for Weighment.

II Policy of the Punjab Government regarding Regularisation of Weighment.

III Analysis of the implementation aspects of Weighment.

IV Status of Hypotheses

V Suggestions given by the respondents on Realisation of Weighment.

VI Overall conclusions regarding Weighment policy.
Agricultural Marketing Regulation Policy: Weighment

Weighment is the second major area which is of vital significance in the arena of agricultural marketing. Weighing as per rules means “putting of the filled bag on the scale, adjustment of weight and putting it down from the scale”\(^1\). A minor error in use of weights or in balance may cause loss of hundreds of rupees to the producer and in terms of lakhs of rupees to the farming community as a whole. Time and again, under the different Acts the Government emphasized the need for the correct weighment of the produce and use of standard weights in weighing of agricultural produce brought by the farmer-sellers. However, the deviations in practice from the law have gone against the economic interests of the producers.

All transactions and the charges in a market in terms of standard packing units are deemed to have been adopted in accordance with fixed standards. Law also prescribes that each bag should be filled to a standard unit level as fixed for different agricultural products. The unit as per rules means “the standard filling in a bag or a container as fixed by the Mandi Board for various items of agricultural produce”\(^2\). According to Srivastava\(^3\) the job of weighmen is to weigh the produce of farmer either by hand or beam balance and keep of record of all weighment done by him during the day. The weighbridge system of weighing exists in a few big markets. In most of the markets, generally weighmen are the employees of the traders/commission agents and they receive weighing charges directly from them. In this process they remain faithful to the traders and weigh the produce in such a manner that ultimately the traders benefit out of it.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to evaluate the provisions of the law relating to the weighment. The chapter has been divided into six parts; the first part deals with the rationale of the weighment. In the second part, the policy of the Punjab Government regarding weighment of agricultural produce has been discussed. The third part discusses implementation of existing

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\(^2\) Ibid.
I

Rationale for Weighment System

In the earlier times, standards of weighing instruments, weights and fixed capacity of the packing materials used in the sale of agriculture produce were absent and transactions used to take place without any standardization. Therefore, traders and buyers were able to cheat the producer-sellers. Further no law was in place to protect farmers from the malpractices. Initially, some traders used to have separate weigh balances for weighment of the purchased produce aiming to get over quantity of the produce and different weigh balances for selling aiming to maximise his profit. It is also mentioned here that no third party between farmers and traders was there for getting the weighment checked. Farmers were fully dependent on the traders for weighment of produce as they were having full faith in them. Hence, need was felt for a third party to protect, the producer-sellers as well as the consumers against the defective weights, weighing instruments and weight of the packing materials.

With the passage of time, Government thought of this and framed policies and enacted the Punjab Weights and Measures Act 1958. In consideration of the weighment policy, agriculture-marketing law was also designed where it was specifically mentioned that the provisions of the instruments, their working and time-to-time testing of the weights should be conducted. A look into the provisions of the law and in order to implement the policy in its real sense, different respondents who are involved in the weighment policy were interviewed. These are the producer-sellers, commission agents, procurement agencies, private purchasers, weighmen, officials of market committees and Mandi Board and Government authorities.
Brief descriptions of the respondents except of weighmen and palledars (labour) have been provided in Chapter III. Weighman can be described as the licensee of market committee who does the work of weighment of agricultural produce including of wheat and paddy as per fixed standards. Palledars/labourers are those persons who provide services in the sale and purchase of agricultural produce in the form of labour for unloading and sieving as well as of carrying the produce.

II

Policy of the Punjab Government regarding Weighment

In this part, provisions of the policy framed by the Government and instructions issued for correct weighment of the agricultural produce from time to time have been discussed. The available provisions of the Act, its rules, bye-laws and instructions in consonance with the Act have also been identified. Following provisions have captured essence of the policy for protecting the producers from the unwanted faulty system of weighment.

(i) “Only such weighing instruments as satisfy the requirements of, and such weights and measures as are prescribed by, the Punjab Weights and Measures Act, 1958, and the rules made there under shall be used for weighing or measuring agricultural produce in a notified market area: provided that in the transactions of sale and purchase of a Agricultural produce in the principal market yard and sub-market yards of the notified market area the beam scale (Kanda) or platform scale shall only be used”  

(ii) “No person shall fill or cause to be filled any agricultural produce except in accordance with standards fixed”.

(iii) “The exact weight of the gunny bag or the packing material used”.

(iv) “Immediately on the completion of weighment of a lot of agricultural produce within a notified market area, either party to the contract may cause a test weighment of ten percent of the unit of packing in a lot or

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5 ibid., p.73.
6 ibid., p.147.
two packing units whichever is more. The test weighment shall be carried out at the site of weighment and if no test weighment is held at site, the produce shall be deemed to have been correctly weighed”.7

(v) “The Board shall fix standards of net weight of agricultural produce to be filled in a packing unit such as bag, a half bag or a palli within each notified market area”.8

(vi) “The committee may erect in the market a weigh bridge for the weighing of agricultural produce on payment of such fees as may be prescribed by its bye-laws”.9

(vii) “No weighman shall act as such within the notified market area unless he is actually wearing the badge. Such badge shall be serially numbered, with name of the committee inscribed on it”.10

The following major aspects have been identified as per Government policy for correct weighment with a view to obtain the responses of different stakeholders:

1. Knowledge about weighing instruments.
2. Whether exact weight of filled bags is weighed as per fixed standards.
3. Actual weight of empty gunny bags is taken.
4. Conduct of test weighment.
5. Satisfaction regarding fixed packing units.
6. Facility of weighbridges in the markets; and
7. Wearing of badges by weighmen.

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7 ibid., p73.
8 ibid., p147.
9 ibid., p75.
10 ibid., p140.
III
Implementation of Different Aspects of Weighment Policy in the Marketing of Wheat and Paddy

Keeping in view the policy framed by the Government and the instructions issued from time to time, the practical situation in the field has been analyzed. Interactions were organised with the producers, commission agents, weighmen, officials of market committees, procurement agencies and private purchasers who were concerned with weighment. Informal discussions with officials and authorities of Mandi Board and Government were also held. The respondents were those who are involved in policy advice and formulation. Secondary data from different published news in Punjabi, Hindi and English news papers were also collected for examining the working of weighment system in different mandis. Various research studies have also been relied upon to interpret the results of this Chapter. Therefore, responses of different categories of stakeholders in the regulated markets of Punjab State and connected with weighing of agricultural produce directly or indirectly have been analyzed and are being presented in this part of the chapter.

1. Knowledge about the weighing instruments

Weighing is an important function or activity for getting correct value of the produce. A minor error in use of weights or in balance may cause loss of hundreds of rupees to each producer seller and in terms of lakhs of rupees to farming community as a whole. The awareness of weighing instruments is must for all stakeholders in general and more so for producer-sellers bringing produce for sale in the mandi. There are varieties of instruments available in the market for weighing of agricultural produce such as electronic weighing scales, manual weighing scales as well as tarkandi. However tarkandi and manual weighing scales are used commonly in majority of the mandis (Shown in figure No.4.1 and figure No. 4.2). The ignorance of the stakeholders regarding these weighing instruments may lead to faulty weighment of the produce. The basic points to be looked of these weighing instruments is to have knowledge regarding the scale, parts of the scale related to proper weighment which otherwise could lead to faulty weighment, their proper handling and installation at the work place.
Figure: 4.1
Weighment Operation with Weighscale

Figure: 4.2
Weighment Operation with Weigh balance
Responses regarding the knowledge about the weighment instruments of different categories of respondents were obtained and are exhibited in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Opinion expressed as having knowledge</th>
<th>Opinion expressed as knowledge is lacking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>72(20.00)</td>
<td>288(80.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission agents</td>
<td>162(90.00)</td>
<td>18(10.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighmen</td>
<td>171(95.00)</td>
<td>9(5.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>63(70.00)</td>
<td>27(30.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>57.78</td>
<td>42.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Field survey*, Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Table 4.1 shows that only 20 percent producers have knowledge about the weighing instruments. Most of the farmers of this category were educated and young. As against this, 80 percent producers expressed the opinion that they have no knowledge about weighing instruments. They generally send their labourers to the market for sale of wheat and paddy because of old age or other compulsions. They also expressed that they are not literate and are under the influence of the commission agents. However, they also expressed that knowledge of weighing instruments is essential and rewarding for them.

Around 90 percent of the commission agents expressed that they have knowledge about weighing instruments; however another 10 percent expressed ignorance about weighing instruments. Only those commission agents know the details of weighing instruments who carry the weighing and trading themselves and are not dependent on their representatives viz. *munim* or head of the labour for weighment. *Nawan Jamana* news paper dated 22-06-05 reported that purchase agencies deducting Rs. 4,50,000/- from the 24 commission agents in the name of shortage but on the other hand,
commission agents say that they get the weighing scale tested and also weigh properly and moreover they are responsible for the weighment up to 24 hours only.

Weighmen to the tune of 95 percent expressed that they have full knowledge of the weighing instruments. Most of the weighmen were literate and worked in the past as labourer or helper for some time with the weighmen. Rest 5 percent weighmen revealed that they are those who were new in the weighment operation and belong to other states and got the licenses only for carrying the seasonal operations.

Around 70 percent officials reported that they have the knowledge of the weighing instruments. These were those officials who were associated with weighing instruments tested under the Weights and Measures Act, 1958 and were posted regularly in mandis. As against this, 30 percent officials reported that they have no or very limited knowledge of the weighing instruments. These were those officials who were posted on temporary basis in the mandi as lower level officials.

Officials of Mandi Board and Government revealed that this policy instrument is in the interest of farmers through knowledge of weighing instruments for different stakeholders is essential but are poor in this knowledge. However they felt that this policy instrument needs more awareness for correct weighment of produce brought by the farmers.

Perusal of the opinion expressed by different stakeholders concludes that less than half of the stakeholders have no or little knowledge about the weighing instruments. As such faulty weighment system cannot be ruled out in the trade of wheat and paddy. The most ignorant about the faulty weighing system are the farmers. Only twenty percent sellers have knowledge about the weighing instruments. Thus, there is need to create awareness on account of weighing instruments for assuring fair returns of produce to the farmers.

2. Weighing the Filled Bags as Per fixed standards

The weight of the agricultural produce to be filled in bags has been fixed by the Board and termed as standard sized bags. If the agricultural produce filled in the bags is not as per fixed standards, loss to the producer
seller is bound to occur due to over weighment by the traders or their representatives. The responses of the different respondents on this count were obtained and are shown in Table 4.2

Table 4.2
Responses regarding Weighing the Filled Bags as Per fixed standards.
(No. of responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>16(4.45)</td>
<td>344(95.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission agents</td>
<td>99(55.00)</td>
<td>81(45.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighmen</td>
<td>135(75.00)</td>
<td>45(25.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement agencies</td>
<td>13(36.11)</td>
<td>23(63.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private purchasers</td>
<td>17(47.22)</td>
<td>19(52.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>45(50.00)</td>
<td>45(50.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>35.14</td>
<td>64.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Table 4.2 shows that 95.55 percent producers disclosed that they are not aware regarding filling of the bags with standard quantity due to their ignorance. The policy regarding units to be weighed with standard quantity of filled bags was not known to majority of the farmers. The producer’s hurry to get their produce weighed immediately was the reason for not filling the bags with standard quantity as prescribed under the law. Dhillon and others revealed in the study that “financial exploitation of Punjab farmers through malpractices in marketing of paddy crop during 1997-98 regarding excess in weighment as Rs 2002 lakh”.

About 55 percent commission agents opined that though they know the standard quantity of units of filled bags but because of more arrivals of produce and hurry of the farmers force them for not to follow the filling of bags with fixed standard quantity as prescribed. They also revealed that the Board has allowed filling with 100gms more produce per bag due to moisture.

Around 75 percent of the sample weighmen expressed that they know the standard units to be filled but exact weighment is not possible due to
heavy seasonal arrivals. Exact weight is not possible within short span of time moreover same labour is used for the operations of unloading, cleaning, and loading of the produce. Generally on an average 75 to 100 gms, over weighment in every unit of wheat with 50kg and in paddy of 35kg is reported.

More than half of the procurement agencies and private purchasers opined that the over weighment of produce is there. In Navan Jamana dated 18/04/05 reported that Chairman, Punjab Mandi Board ordered cancellation of licence for 600 gms per bag over weighment. The Tribune reported dated 05/05/05 that a survey by the marketing wing of the agricultural department found 500 to 800 gms per 50 kg over weighment. Food and Supplies Department issued ten Show cause notices to commission agents.

Half of the officials reported that filled bags are not weighed as per fixed standards. This is due to heavy rush of arrivals, pressure of farmers to free them immediately and existence of uneven places of weighment. Some times over weighment per bag was also found. Desh Sewak on 20/04/05 reported that Bhartia Kissan Union demanded action against the commission agents for excess weighment up to 300 to 700gms per bag and Deputy Commissioner Bhatinda found 250gms per bag over weighment. Sub Divisional Magistrate ordered for licence suspension on 500-1200gms over weighment.

The authorities and officials of Mandi Board and Government revealed that the existing provision for weighment of produce as per standards is in the interest of producer-sellers and other stakeholders and this policy instrument needs strict application in true spirit.

Appraisal of the overall view of stakeholders (more than 60 percent stakeholders) viz producers, commission agents, weighmen, procurement agencies, private purchasers and officials revealed that weighment of filled bags is not taking place as per fixed standards, rather every bag was over weighed than prescribed standards. Thus, farmers are put to loss due to over weighment of the quantity. Total loss to farmers on this account is in terms of lakhs of rupees during every crop season in the state.

3. Actual Weight of Empty Gunny Bags

Bags available in the market are used in filling of wheat and paddy is of different qualities and as such the weight of the empty bags also varies as per
their weaving quality. If the farmer knows the weight of the empty gunny bag, he can save extra produce to be weighted in lieu of empty gunny bag, which otherwise causes loss to him. These are not weighed individually shown in figure 4.3.

![Individual Empty Bags are not Weighed](image)

The responses of various stakeholders on knowledge of empty gunny bags are summarized in Table 4.3.

**Table: 4.3**

Responses on Actual Weight of Empty Bags

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>4(1.11)</td>
<td>356(98.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission Agents</td>
<td>90(50.00)</td>
<td>90(50.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weigh men</td>
<td>108(60.00)</td>
<td>72(40.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Agencies</td>
<td>29(80.56)</td>
<td>7(19.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Purchasers</td>
<td>27(75.00)</td>
<td>9(25.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>9(10.00)</td>
<td>81(90.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>30.27</td>
<td>69.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey  Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.
Table 4.3 shows that about 98.89 percent producers disclosed that they have no knowledge of the weight of the empty gunny bags used in weighing of wheat and paddy. They also reported that they had not seen any person or authority conducting or finding the actual weight of empty gunny bags.

Half of the commission agents opined that they have knowledge of actual weight of bags and other half opined that they have no knowledge. They deduct the weight of bags as decided by traders or procurement agencies from the total weight of produce including empty bags. As such there is no independent agency in the market for confirmation of actual weight of bags. In case of dispute, actual weight is worked by weighing the sample gunny bag. Commission agents accept that weight of bag varies from 600 gms to 700 gms depending on the quality of jute used in its manufacture.

Around 60 percent weighmen expressed that they have knowledge of weight of empty bags manufactured and are used as packing material for wheat and paddy. About 40 percent weighmen reported that they have no knowledge and hence deduct weight of empty gunny bags as directed by the commission agents. Some times weighmen also confirm the weight of bags at their own level by actually weighing five or ten gunny bags.

Procurement agencies i.e. 80.56 percent disclosed that they take the weight of single empty bag after weighing the total ten or twenty number of bags at a time and then calculate the weight of single empty bag accordingly. Although different lots of bags had different weights due to different quality and moisture of bags. It was also revealed by them that a single bag was never weighed. The weight of empty gunny bag is deducted at a flat rate of 600 to 700 gms per bag (50kg of wheat and 35 kg of paddy) irrespective of the actual weight. Generally the weight of empty gunny bag is 700 to 800gms depending upon the type of jute used in its manufacture and company which manufactured jute bags.

Private purchasers i.e. 75 percent had knowledge of weight of empty bag but they take in account the prevalent market practice instead of the actual weight of the individual empty bag.
Officials to the extent of 90 percent said that actual weight of each empty bag is not possible. A deduction is generally as per the will of the purchaser.

Majority of the authorities and officials of Mandi Board and Government revealed that they had different types of empty gunny bags prevails in the market. However, they know that farmers are put to loss in absence of this knowledge. Hence this policy instrument needs strict application.

On an overall basis, more than 69.73 percent of the stakeholders in aggregate opined that the actual weight of gunny bags is not known to them. They also revealed that in actual trade transactions of wheat and paddy, weight of bags is not subtracted on actual basis but deducted generally at a flat rate of 700 to 800 gm per bag of 50 kg of wheat and 35 kg of paddy. Hence farmers get less payment of wheat or paddy per bag of the produce. There is need that all the stakeholders should have adequate knowledge of weight of bags. This knowledge is more important for farmers than the other stakeholders.

4. **Conduct of Test Weighment.**

Produce is weighed by weighmen and actual weight varies due to various reasons, it may be either due to technical reasons or may be manmade. The important point arises here is that the weighment of the produce must be done correctly. For this purpose, conducting of test weighment is of immense importance. The responses of the stakeholders on conduct of test weighment in the market are shown in Table 4.4.

**Table: 4.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>18(5.00)</td>
<td>342(95.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission agents</td>
<td>36(20.00)</td>
<td>144(80.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weigh men</td>
<td>27(15.00)</td>
<td>153(85.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>22(24.44)</td>
<td>68(75.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>12.82</td>
<td>86.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Field survey* Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

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Table 4.4 shows that 95 percent of the producers disclosed that they had no knowledge regarding the conduct of test weighments. It was reported that some farmers remain present at the time of weighment however weighment in majority of the cases is done in presence of the labourers of farmer-sellers. It was also disclosed by them that whenever test weighment is conducted in its true sense, even excess weighment more than half kg per bag of 50 kg wheat and 35 kg of paddy has been reported. News appeared 21/04/05 in *Punjabi Tribune* and *Chardikala* reported that Chairman Punjab Mandi Board advised that the farmers be more conscious at the time of weighment and should remain present at that time. He also cautioned the commission agents, Secretary Market Committees and dealing officials for ensuring actual weighment and suggested farmers for adoption of test weighment of produce occasionally at their own also. This creates trust among the farmers on the adoption of fair market practices in the mandis.

Commission agents to the tune of 80 percent opined that though they know about the test weighment but are not conducted during normal course.

The weighmen (85 percent) also opined that the practice of test weighments is not followed. They also disclosed that weight of the same lot of agriculture produce is not always same when weighed at different times due to presence of moisture in rainy season or drying of produce in summers.

Majority of officials i.e. 75 percent disclosed that the test weighment is not conducted and whenever it was conducted they found the weight as correct. Board has allowed excess weighment up to 100gms per bag to the weighmen. They also revealed that the test weighment is not conducted due to their manifold duties, less number of officials, heavy arrivals and short duration of the day especially in paddy season.

Officials of Mandi Board and Government also revealed that the knowledge of test weighment lacks at the level of farmers and also due to lack of interest of officials to implement it. Every Committee has to keep at least one weighing instrument of the capacity of one quintal and two sets of weights in the market yard, which are tested, stamped and verified once in each calendar year in accordance with the provisions of the Punjab Weights and Measures Act, 1958 to ensure correct weighment. However, test weighments are *done* on the weighing scales of the commission agents and that defeats
the basic purpose of conduct of test weighment.

On overall basis, more than 87 percent of the stakeholders revealed that test weighment is not conducted as per policy in its true spirit for safe guarding the farmer's interest.

5. Satisfaction Regarding fixed Packing Units.

The agricultural produce is transacted in various fixed weight quantity lots. These are called units. The Board has fixed 95 kg., 75 kg., and 50 kg., per bag of wheat and paddy units as 65 kg., 50kg, and 33kg per bag. But, purchase agencies took 35kg per unit of paddy. Some of the fixed units are not convenient and put financial loss to the farmers and also time consuming for weighing these very units and thus delays the trade operations. Keeping this in view, opinions were obtained for knowing whether these units are alright and if not what should be the new units for wheat and paddy. The results obtained on this parameter are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Responses on the existing quantity levels of fixed packing Units for wheat and paddy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>25(6.94)</td>
<td>335(93.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission agents</td>
<td>18(10.00)</td>
<td>162(90.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighmen</td>
<td>175(97.22)</td>
<td>5(2.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palledars</td>
<td>175(97.22)</td>
<td>5(2.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement agencies</td>
<td>32(88.88)</td>
<td>4(11.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private purchasers</td>
<td>30(83.33)</td>
<td>6(16.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>32(35.55)</td>
<td>58(64.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>45.86</td>
<td>54.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Table 4.5 shows that majority of the producers (around 93 percent) and commission agents (90 percent) viewed that the present level of weight units for wheat and paddy are not convenient. They expressed extreme dissatisfaction regarding weight units of 35 kg paddy, as it consumes lot of time, in weighing of the small quantity in each bag. This adds labour cost in addition to delay in clearance of the total produce arrived in the market.
Farmers specifically revealed that 35 kg unit puts them financial loss due to per bag over weighment and as per fixed charges of this unit as compared to other units.

As against this, almost all weighmen and palledars (97.22 percent) and procurement agencies (88.88 percent) expressed satisfaction on the present level of weight units for wheat and paddy. Weighmen were more satisfied with small units of wheat and paddy due to easiness in weighment and better total earnings by weighing of the produce as weighing charges are paid based on number of units rather on the weight of the unit. According to them, 95 kg and 75 kg in case of wheat and 65 kg in case of paddy is not easy to handle.

Procurement agencies expressed that they are to follow the policy of Government and majority viewed that 35 kg of paddy is not viable unit. Private purchasers revealed that Government have given them the option to get weighment of 95 kg and 75 kg of wheat and 65 kg of paddy vis-à-vis 50kg and 35 kg respectively.

Around two third officials said that they were not satisfied with the present level of 35 kg of paddy fixed unit because more number of units’ creates operational problems. Sometimes space for unloading of fresh arrived produce is not available as more time is taken in lifting of more number of bags from the market.

The authorities and officials of Board and Government revealed that the weight of produce in the units is fixed as per the instructions of central government for procurement and others are fixed as per practice in the markets. They also revealed that International Labour Organisation has resolved to fix unit upto 50kg only, which is under consideration.

The overall versions of the stakeholders revealed that 53.20 percent stakeholders were not satisfied with the present fixed packing units specifically 35kg of paddy and hence there is need to change the weight per unit of bag both for wheat and paddy. Small weight units adds cost of performing operations such as of weighing, loading on the transport mean in addition to delay in clearance of the arrivals from the market. Delay in clearance of the market also causes problems to new sellers bringing the produce for sale on the next day. 95 kg and 75 kg of wheat and 65 kg of paddy are to be amended.
6. Facility of Weighbridges in the markets.

The Weighbridges are used for weighment of full truckloads / tractor load of produce as such. It was experienced that loss in weight of produce could be minimized if whole lot of produce is weighed at one time. The Royal Commission on Agriculture\(^\text{11}\) in 1928 also suggested that “the installation of weighbridges in markets is must because producer sellers were looted by kanta or by use of fraudulent weights & scales. The Commission reported to parliament that in order to prevent fraudulent weighment, committee must provide weighbridges in the markets with suitable arrangements for its use”. The provision of the bye-law provides that “wherever a weighbridge has been installed by the Committee in the principal market yard or sub market yard the vehicle shall be weighed on the weighbridge of the Committee”\(^\text{12}\). Table 4.6 depicts the number of installed weighbridges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Number of Market Committees</th>
<th>Number of installed Weighbridges</th>
<th>Whether working</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bathinda</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Faridkot</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>145</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Punjab Mandi Board)

\(^{11}\) Abridged Report (1928) “Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India” presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty June, 1928 (pp43-46), London printed in India.

Table 4.7 depicts the responses of the stakeholders regarding Weighbridges.

Table: 4.7
Facility of weigh bridges for Weighment.
(No. of responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>7(1.94)</td>
<td>353(98.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission Agents</td>
<td>9(5.00)</td>
<td>171(95.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>15(16.66)</td>
<td>75(83.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>95.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Table 4.7 shows that the producers were of the view that the facility of weighbridges for weighment was not provided. About 98 percent were those who said that the facility of weigh bridges did not serve their purpose because commission agents prefer weigh scales for weighment and moreover labourers and purchaser have their own vested interests.

Majority of commission agents (95 percent) opined that they did not prefer weigh bridges because in case of failure to weigh properly if that very produce could not be weighed properly, they will be responsible for the loss of weight. They also revealed that weigh scale system for weighment is prevalent system that is why they preferred weighment on the weigh scales only. The commission agents also express their opinion that if the farmers wanted they could use weighbridges for test checking of their produce.

Majority of officials i.e. 83.34 percent stated that the facility of weigh bridges for weighment was not provided due to administrative problems. The present weigh bridges, which were installed, were also not operational due to the fact that some of the platforms were of smaller capacities, which could not weigh a tractor trolley. Some are not installed properly. Majority also revealed that weighbridges policy is not properly implemented.

Authorities of Mandi Board and Government revealed that the correct estimate of weight of the produce with the producer-sellers is must so that no one can cheat farmers during weighment of individual units but non availability of weighbridges affects basically producer-sellers and also affects efficiency in
the sale and purchase operations. Hence, this policy instrument needs strict application and implementing authorities must install good quality weighbridges in every market.

In brief different stakeholders revealed that weighbridges were not provided in the markets and wherever provided are not utilized properly.

7. **Wearing of Badges by Weighmen.**

Wearing of badges by the weighmen is essential because it facilitates the identification of genuine weighmen by the seller and the buyer. The weighmen wearing the badges also becomes conscious for doing the operation of proper weighment. Keeping this in view, opinion of different stakeholders were obtained as wearing of bags and how it facilitate the seller-farmers and buyers in disposing the produce with correct weighment. The responses of the stakeholders are presented in Table 4.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>4(1.11)</td>
<td>356(98.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission agents</td>
<td>36(5.00)</td>
<td>144(95.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighmen</td>
<td>72(40.00)</td>
<td>108(60.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>27(30.00)</td>
<td>63(70.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>13.82</td>
<td>86.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Field survey*, Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Table 4.8 shows that about 99 percent and 95 percent producers and commission agents respectively reported that weighmen did not wear badges while performing the weighing operations. As against this, 40 percent weighmen and 30 percent officials of *mandi* expressed their opinion against this i.e they wear badges while performing weighing operation as provided by the market committees. Weighmen revealed that sometimes, they forget to wear this. Some of them pointed that they are not aware that wearing of
badge is necessary in the mandi although they keep badges with them. Some officials pointed that market committees are not ensuring the compliance.

The officials and authorities of the Mandi Board and Government revealed that the knowledge regarding wearing of badges is lacking and hence weighmen do not put them outside of their clothes. The unauthorised weighmen take the advantage of this ignorance and also do the job of weighing of produce at lower charges.

On an overall basis, 86.18 percent stakeholders expressed that weighmen do not wear badges while performing the job of weighment of produce in the mandis and rest 13.82 percent pointed that weighmen wear badges while performing the weighment operation. Wearing of badges benefit to producer-sellers in directly as it ensures to the parties that their produce has been weighed by right weighmen and weighment has been correctly done.

IV
Status of Hypothesis for Weighment Policy

The hypothesis regarding weighment Policy in this study is “The weighment of wheat and paddy is not proper in the regulated markets and deviates from the weighment policy prescribed under ‘The Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act 1961’”. This hypothesis has been splitted into the following sub-hypotheses:

(i) Majority of stakeholders do not have knowledge about weighing instruments.
(ii) Weight of filled bags is not as per fixed standards.
(iii) Actual weight of empty gunny bag is not taken.
(iv) Test weighment is not conducted.
(v) The present standards of fixed packing units for wheat and paddy are not satisfactory.
(vi) Facility of weighbridges in the markets is almost non existence.
(vii) Non wearing of badges by weighmen harms the interests of farmers.

The testing of this hypothesis has been conducted on the basis of the overall results of each related sub hypotheses depicted in table 4.9.

### Table 4.9
Status of Sub-Hypotheses for Correct Weighment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Hypothesis</th>
<th>Data and analysis</th>
<th>Status of Sub-hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Majority of stakeholders do not have knowledge about weighing instruments.</td>
<td>Overall 57.78 percent of stakeholders expressed their knowledge about weighing instruments. Majority of farmers (80 percent) are not having adequate knowledge about weighing instruments. As such faulty weighment system cannot be ruled out in the sale and purchase of wheat and paddy. Commission agents (90 percent), weighmen (95 percent) and officials (70 percent) expressed that they have knowledge of the weighing instruments.</td>
<td>As majority (57.78 percent) revealed that they are having knowledge about weighing instruments although farmers lack the adequate knowledge due to illiteracy. Based on data analysis the hypothesis namely majority of stakeholders have knowledge about weighing instruments gets rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Weight of filled bags is not as per fixed standards.</td>
<td>Majority of the respondents revealed that weights of filled bags are not as per the fixed standards. Appraisal of the overall view suggests that more than 60 percent stakeholders viz. producer sellers (95 percent), commission agents (45 percent), weighmen (25 percent), procurement agencies (58.60 percent), private purchasers (53.06 percent) and officials (50 percent) opined that weighment of filled bags is not taking place as per fixed standards. Secondary data also confirm this.</td>
<td>Weight of filled bags is not as per the standards due to: - (i) Prevalence of vested interests of commission agents and buyers. (ii) Heavy arrivals per day. (iii) Lack of awareness among farmers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The hypothesis namely weight of filled bags is not as per fixed standards gets accepted.

(iii) Actual weight of empty gunny bag is not taken.

Individual bags were not weighed as more than 3/4th of stakeholders supported this statement. Producers (98.89 percent), commission agents (50 percent) weighmen (40 percent), procurement agencies (19.49 percent), private purchasers (25 percent) and officials (90 percent) revealed that the actual weight of gunny bags does not take place.

Implementation inadequacies in this aspect prevails due to:

(i) Commission agents, purchasers and weighmen's vested interests.

(ii) Heavy arrivals per day.

(iii) Farmers are not fully aware of this due to paucity of time. Finally the hypothesis is accepted.

(iv) Test weighment is not conducted.

Majority of produce was not test checked as revealed by majority of stakeholders (87.29 percent). It was also revealed that even during test weighment, actual weight of bags is not subtracted rather deduction at a flat rate takes place. Producer sellers (5 percent), commission agents (20 percent), weighmen (15 percent) and officials (around 25 percent) opined that test weighment done is not effective to ensure fault free weighment system.

Test weighment is not conducted due to:

(i) Major part of the produce purchased by Government.

(ii) Heavy arrivals per day.

(iii) Farmers are not fully aware of this.

(iv) Existence of vested interests

The hypothesis, “Test weighment is not conducted” is
| (v) The present standards of fixed packing units for wheat and paddy are not satisfactory. | Overall 54 percent revealed that 35kg unit of paddy is not satisfactory. The farmers (93.06 percent) revealed non-satisfaction on 35kg of paddy over other standard units. Producers (6.94 percent), commission agents (10 percent) weighmen and palledars (97.22 percent), procurement agencies (88.88 percent), private purchasers (83.33 percent) and officials (35.55 percent) reluctantly revealed that small weight units adds to the cost of performing operations i.e. in addition to delay in clearance of the arrivals and creates problems for new sellers bringing the produce for sale on the next day. | Financial loss to the farmers and operational problem to officials are faced due to 35 kg unit in case of paddy. Units of 75kg and 95 kg are not easy to handle. The hypothesis thus gets validated |
| (vi) Facility of weighbridges in the markets is almost non existence. | It has been found that in majority of markets, weighbridges are not installed and wherever provided are not being properly utilized. Producer sellers (98.06 percent), commission agents (95 percent) and officials (83.34 percent) and overall 95.09 percent revealed non availability of this facility which adversely affects the proper weighment. | The weighbridges facility is not widely available in markets due to; (i) Vested interests. (ii) Ignorance of the farmers. (iii) Non implementation by competent authorities wherever available. The hypothesis thus gets accepted. |
| (vii) Non wearing of badges by weighmen harms the interests of farmers. | On an overall basis, 86.18 percent stakeholders expressed that weighmen do not wear badges. Wearing of badges provide benefit to the producers in form of their identification. Producer sellers (1.11 percent), commission agents (5 percent), weighmen (40 percent), and officials(30 percent) revealed that Non wearing of badges by weighmen is widely reported due to; (i) Ignorance of the farmers. (ii) Lack of emphasis |
The interpretations of results of various sub-hypotheses revealed that ignorance of producers, vested interests of various stakeholders and non-implementation by officials are responsible for poor compliance of weighment policy. Thus, from the foregoing analysis, it can be concluded that majority of the provisions are adversely affecting the weighment policy in the markets and these deviate from the prescribed limit as mentioned under ‘The Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act, 1961’ and therefore, the hypothesis, namely, “The weighment of wheat and paddy is not proper in the regulated markets and deviates from the weighment policy prescribed under ‘The Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act 1961’”, gets accepted.

V

Suggestions given by the Respondent/ Stakeholders Regarding Weighment Policy

The foregoing analysis suggests that most of the provisions of the Act, rules, bye-laws and instructions regarding weighment were not implemented in their true spirit. In the light of this, different areas have been identified for ensuring fair and correct weighment.

The areas identified for ensuring fair and correct weighment and suggestions under each one of them are reported as under:

1. Implementation of the provisions in true sense

(a) The officials must test check fixed percentage of bags of every heap to ensure that filled bags are weighed as per their actual weight. Test weighments of weighed bags must be conducted for every heap
depending on the volume of produce.

(b) Moisture content in produce and some times in bags exists but 100gms of produce at a flat rate of 95kg wheat and 65kg paddy per bag should not be permitted to the weighmen as this allures the weighmen and the commission agents to take advantage of this. Officials of market committee should determine it and should introduce the practice of deducting the amount fixed by the market committees.

(c) The market committee must have atleast one weighing instrument of the capacity of one quintal installed in the market at fixed place so that any farmer can test check the bags.

(d) For ensuring fair weighment, there is need to keep an eye on every heap. Per day arrivals must be regulated as per space available for sale and purchase. Sufficient time should also be given for fair weighment of produce.

(e) Regulation of the unloading, cleaning, auction, weighment and loading of produce operations in the market should be done at different specific fixed hours as the same labour is used for performing for all these operations.

(f) The market committees should assign the task of knowing the correct weight of empty gunny bags to their staff and deductions be allowed accordingly.

(g) The weighmen must positively and regularly wear badges so that the stakeholders could identify them.

II. Provisions which require amendments

(a) The agricultural produce transacted in various fixed weight units viz. 95 kg, 75 kg, and 50 kg, per bag for wheat and 65 kg, 50kg, and 35kg for paddy require fresh look as some of the fixed weight units particularly small size units put the farmers to huge financial loss and requires more space in the market and bigger sized units are not easy to handle.

(b) The facility of weighbridges in the markets be provided wherever they
have not been provided. To implement this, mandatory provision must be made and every Market Committee must install weighbridges in their market yard and weighment of produce should be ensured only through them.

III. Organising training and awareness programmes

There is need to conduct training and awareness programme on different components of weighment for all the stakeholders.

(a) For producers (farmers): - From the producer sellers’ responses, it was found that illiteracy and dependency of the farmers on commission agents exist. It has been found that they did not have requisite knowledge on the use of the weighing instruments, weight of filled bags as per fixed standards, actual weight of empty gunny bag to be deducted, conduct of test weighment, the facility of weighbridges in the markets and about the persons responsible to weigh their produce. For this, training and awareness programme must be conducted. Following measures are suggested to improve the situation.

(i) Village level camps on practical training must be organised.

(ii) Radio and television should be used to educate the farmers under local programmes.

(iii) The print media such as newspapers and magazines (periodicals) of Punjabi language should also be used for this purpose.

(iv) Documentaries highlighting different aspects of weighing must be shown in the villages/markets before the on set of marketing season.

(b) For commission agents

The responses of the commission agents show that they are also not fully aware about weighment system. The awareness programmes be conducted by the Market Committees for the commission agents to improve upon the situation.

(c) For weighmen

Weighmen are the central players in the weighment of produce, thus it is suggested that
(i) The Market committees must organize training programmes for weighmen at least twice a year.

(ii) The manufacturer of the instrument or technocrat of the company should be involved in conduct of the training programmes.

(iii) The weighmen who have taken the licence a fresh, must be given a demonstration on use of weighing instruments.

(d) For officials

The officials who are directly involved with the marketing must be given training regarding the working of weighing instruments at market or district level.

(i) In granting of license of weighmen, the condition of having proper knowledge of weighing instruments must be strictly adhered.

(ii) There is need to have a short-term training on weighing instruments for officials' at least once a year for a day.

Another provision which emerged during discussion was the introduction of system of providing financial incentive for those who follow the proper weighing system and penalty for the violators.

IV. Introduction of system providing incentive and punishments.

The officials and stakeholders who follow the provisions in real sense should be given financial incentives and in contrast, those who violate the provisions needs to be punished.

VI

Conclusions

Proper weighment of produce in sale and purchase is very important aspect of marketing of Agricultural produce. The Government has acknowledged the importance of weighment and hence has made it a part of its regulatory policy. For ensuring proper weighment, eight parameters such as knowledge about weighing instruments, whether exact weight of filled bags is weighed as per fixed standards, whether actual weight of empty gunny bags is taken, whether test weighment is conducted, satisfaction on the
The first and foremost aspect of weighment is knowledge about it. It was found that most of the farmers and commission agents are not fully aware about the weighment system. Regarding the second variable on weighment of filled bags as per fixed standards, majority revealed that the filled bags are not weighed as per standard weight fixed due to heavy arrivals, pressure of farmers to be freed immediately, uneven places of weighment and availability of faulty instruments of weighment. The actual weight of the empty bags is also not taken due to heavy rush of arrivals and multifarious duties of the officials. The weight of the empty bag ranges from 600-700gms of a bag having 50 kg capacity of wheat and 35kg of paddy but 700 to 800 gm weight of bag is taken. No bag was weighed individually to know the actual weight. So as to save the farmers from over weighments, test weighments is to be conducted but this aspect was also not adhered to in its true spirit. Every Market committee is supposed to keep at least one weighing instrument of the capacity of one quintal to carry the test weighment which is not being enforced. The satisfaction among different stakeholders over present level of fixed packing units was also very low. The prevailing units of 35kg per bag of paddy have not been appreciated by majority of the stakeholders due to the financial loss accruing to the farmers and time taken for weighing these very small units. Operational problems and excessive labour charges for weighment on per unit is more compared to other sized fixed units of bags. This also takes more time to lift the produce i.e. to clear the mandi. But, 75 kg. and 95 kg. of wheat and 65 kg. of paddy are having fresh look by competent authorities due to bigger unit as per ILO prescriptions. Facility of weighbridge does not exist in most of the markets. Commission agents are not interested in this facility due to their vested interests. The weighmen also do not like weighbridge facility because by using the weigh scales they get employment. The weighmen usually do not wear badges at the time of weighing of produce and in absence even the unauthorized or non-licensed weighmen also weighs the produce and get weighment charges.

On an overall basis on the opinion of stakeholders, it can be concluded...
that weighment instrument is not adopted as per provisions of the Act, rules and bye-laws. This situation needs to be improved for providing fair return of the produce (wheat and paddy) to the farmers. The hypothesis formulated earlier that weighment of wheat and paddy in the markets of Punjab is not as per set provisions of the Act, rules and bye-laws and instructions, is true and hence is accepted.