

## **A Study on the Views of PDS Beneficiaries about the Quantity and Quality of Commodities, Supplied by the FPS in Haryana and Gujarat**

**M.A.Ravindhar<sup>1</sup> and J.K.Tandon<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Ph.D Scholar, School of Business and Management, Jaipur National University, Jaipur, India*

<sup>2</sup>*Research Advisor, School of Business and Management, Jaipur National University, Jaipur, India*

*Corresponding author: m.a.ravindhar@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

Public Distribution System not only provides essential goods to the common man at a reasonable price, but it also enables the farmers to get a suitable price for their produce. The PDS, despite its much success, has over the years manifested a broad array of problems particularly with reference to its management. The extent and timing of procurement, poor forecasting capacity, antiquated logistical systems to support storage and delivery functions, inappropriate product mix, cost inefficiencies, poor quality food grain, harassment of consumers at the point of client interface and exclusion of large number of the poor from the system are some of the problems which hinder the effectiveness of the public distribution system. Keeping these perspectives in view, this paper analyses the views of PDS beneficiaries about the quantity and quality of commodities supplied by the fair price shops in Haryana and Gujarat.

The findings reveal a discouraging picture of the situation particularly with reference to the quantity and quality of food grains and other items supplied by the fair price shops to the PDS beneficiaries in Haryana and Gujarat. Beneficiaries have been denied supply of essential commodities on account of one or the other reasons. For example, rice was not supplied to more than 80.00% of the beneficiaries in the study area and the quality of rice supplied was also just normal according to 9.50% of the rural and 13.00% of the urban respondents. In case of wheat, close to 50.00% of the respondents were denied supply by the fair price shops in the study area and the quality of wheat was considered to be normal as per the views of 29.00% of the rural and 30.00% of the urban respondents. In general, the quality of essential commodities supplied by the fair price shops in the study areas was only normal and the state governments of Haryana and Gujarat should take initiatives to improve the supply to more number of PDS beneficiaries as well as to improve the quality of the essential commodities supplied by the fair price shops.

**Keywords:** Public distribution system, fair price shop, quantity, quality, essential commodities

Public Distribution System, a national food security mechanism, was established by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.<sup>1</sup> Today it is one of the largest programs in the world and supplies each year commodities worth more than ₹ 15000.00 crores to about 160 million families. Also, it supports food grain producers through purchases by the Food Corporation of India at a Minimum Support Price (MSP) based on the recommendations of an independent body called the Commission and Agricultural Cost and Price. The Public Distribution System also provides gainful employment for about 5 lakh fair price shop owners, their employees and hired labour who work at the Food Corporation of India and State Warehousing godowns.<sup>2</sup>

The Public Distribution System is the backbone of an economy, especially the economy of a developing country like India which is facing numerous problems like poverty, scarcity of food, price fluctuation, disparity between high and low income groups, poor agriculture facilities, etc. PDS is not only a system of providing essential goods to the vulnerable population at a difficult time but it helps the farmer to get a proper price for their produce and stabilizes the prices of various commodities in the market. The PDS also attempts to eliminate middlemen barriers, protect the low income group from hunger by guaranteeing them supply of certain minimum quantities of food grains at a reasonable price, remove the imbalance between supply and demand, check hoarding and black marketing of essential commodities, ensure social justice in the distribution of basic necessities of life by keeping a check on the fluctuations of prices, stabilization of food prices and prices of other key essential items at fair prices to protect the real purchasing power of the consumers; especially those belonging to the poor section of the society. But the PDS does not satisfy the needs of the poor for whom it was intended, (Sinha 1991).<sup>3</sup>

Survey by ORG-MARG, commissioned by CAG, observed dissatisfaction among the card holders due to leakage, under-weighting and poor quality of food grains supplied.<sup>4</sup> Chattopadhyaya (1980) revealed that essential food grains supplied through PDS are poor in quality as compared to open market.<sup>5</sup> Balakrishnan, *et al.* (1997) studied the effect of the quality of products provided under Public Distribution System and open market. The increase in the issue price increases the cost of PDS grain and forces the customers to switch to the open market; however, the effect is not always direct.<sup>6</sup>

Agarwal (1980) quoted that the problem of PDS is unfortunate and the goods supplied to fair price shops are inadequate. It is a hard fact that though sugar is allotted for rural areas, it never reaches the rural people and is sold at black-market price in urban area.<sup>7</sup> The problem of bogus ration cards has further complicated the matter because it builds artificial demand when supply continues to remain short. Realizing the importance of PDS as well as the quality and quantity of food grains supplied by the Fair Price Shops (FPS), an attempt is made in this paper to assess the views of

PDS beneficiaries about the quantity and quality of food grains supplied by the FPS in Haryana and Gujarat, where the performance of PDS is considered to be better, with the following specific objectives:

1. To find out the food grains and other items supplied by the fair price shops in Haryana and Gujarat;
2. To assess the quantity of food grains and other items supplied by the fair price shops in Haryana and Gujarat; and
3. To evaluate the quality of food grains and other items supplied by the fair price shops in Haryana and Gujarat.

## **METHOD OF STUDY**

The study was conducted in Haryana and Gujarat and data for this study were collected during 2013-2014 as part of Ph.D thesis work entitled 'A Comparative Study of Public Distribution System in Haryana and Gujarat'. From each state, two districts were selected by following the criteria of a district close to the state headquarter and another district which is located very far away from the state headquarter. Accordingly, Panchkula; a district close to the state headquarter and Sonipat; a district located far away from the state headquarter were selected from Haryana. Following the same criteria, two districts were selected from Gujarat which include; Mehsana located close to the state headquarter and Valsad very far away. From each district, two blocks (one rural and one urban) were selected. From each of the two blocks, one village from rural block and one ward from urban block were selected, i.e., one block close to the district headquarter (urban) and another one located far away from the district headquarter (rural). From each block, two FPS shops representing urban and rural areas were selected. From each shop coverage area, around 50 card holders were randomly selected from the list of beneficiaries entered in the register maintained by the respective FPS owners. In all, the study had 400 PDS beneficiaries.

## **KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Food Grains and other Items Supplied by the FPS**

The PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the center and state governments. The central is responsible for procurement, storage, transportation, (up to the district headquarters) and bulk allocation of food grains and the state is responsible for distributing the food grains to the consumers through a network of fair price shops. The major items such as Rice, Wheat, Sugar, Pulses and Kerosene Oil were supplied by the fair price shops in Haryana and Gujarat to the PDS beneficiaries. The PDS beneficiaries in both the states had different views about the quantity and quality of the commodities supplied by the FPS which are presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

## QUANTITY OF FOOD GRAINS AND OTHER ITEMS SUPPLIED BY THE FPS

### Quantity of Rice

Data presented in Table 1 reveal that all the PDS beneficiaries in the study area of Haryana except 2.00% of rural Panchkula were not supplied rice by the fair price shops. The PDS beneficiaries of Mehsana (80.00% rural and 72.00% urban) and Valsad (40.00% rural and 52.00% urban) districts of Gujarat were not supplied rice by the fair price shop. Up to 5 kg of rice was supplied by the fair price shops to 21.50% and 6-10 kg to about 13.50% of PDS beneficiaries in Gujarat. About 8.00% of the respondents from the urban area and two percent from rural area of Valsad, Gujarat, had received 11-15 kg of rice from the ration shop. Even more than 16.00 kg of rice was also received by 8.00% of the respondents from the fair price shop in the study area of Gujarat. It is unfortunate that though the rice was considered as one of the essential items for distribution under Public Distribution System but it has not been taken seriously by both the states under study. The quantity of rice supplied by the fair price shop is much lesser than the requirements of PDS beneficiaries in the study area. In a study by Puri (2012) in the state of Chhattishgarh, found out that the PDS beneficiaries desired more rice as compared to wheat.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 1: Quantity of Rice Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quantity of Rice	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Not given	80.00	72.00	98.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	40.00	52.00	79.50	81.00
Up to 5 Kg	10.00	14.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	32.00	30.00	10.50	11.00
6 - 10 Kg	6.00	12.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.00	16.00	6.50	7.00
11 - 15 Kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.00	2.00	2.00	0.50
16+ Kg	4.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.50	0.50

### Quantity of Wheat

Thirty six percent of the urban respondents and forty three and half percent of the rural respondents mentioned to have not been given wheat by the ration shop out of 400 rural and urban respondents. Up to 10 kg of wheat was received by 27.50% of the urban respondents and 12.50% of the rural respondents out of 400 PDS beneficiaries. Where-as 11-20 kg of wheat was received by sixteen and half percent of the rural respondents and four and half percent of the urban respondents. Nearly one fourth of

the respondents in rural area and more than one fourth of the respondents in urban area received 31-35 kg of wheat from the ration shop.

Further it can be seen from Table 2 that more than half of the respondents (52% rural and 56% urban) from Mehsana (Gujarat) and (68% rural and 64% urban) from Panchkula (Haryana); one fourth of the respondents each from rural Sonitpat (Haryana) and rural Valsad (Gujarat) mentioned to have not been given wheat by the ration shop. Ninety percent of the urban Valsad and thirty two percent of the rural Mehasana received up to 10 kg of wheat. In rural Sonipat, three fourth of the respondents and in urban Sonipat eighty four percent of the respondents received 31-35 kg of wheat from the ration shop. The supply of wheat to the PDS beneficiaries was better in Sonipat district of Haryana as compared to Panchkula district of Haryana. It is unfair that inter-district variation should not have been there within the state.

**Table 2: Quantity of Wheat Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quantity of Wheat	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Not given	52.00	56.00	68.00	64.00	26.00	16.00	28.00	8.00	43.50	36.00
Up to 10 Kg	32.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.00	90.00	12.50	27.50
11 - 20 Kg	12.00	16.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	54.00	2.00	16.50	4.50
21 - 30 Kg	4.00	8.00	8.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	2.50
16+ Kg	0.00	0.00	24.00	34.00	74.00	84.00	0.00	0.00	24.50	29.50

### Quantity of Sugar

Fifty eight percent of the rural respondents and fifty six percent of the urban respondents mentioned that they have not been given sugar by the ration shop out of 400 respondents. Two to three kg of sugar was received by twenty nine percent of the rural respondents and thirty three and half percent of the urban respondents out of 400 PDS beneficiaries. Two percent of the respondents each from urban and rural areas received sugar up to 1 kg and one to two kg of sugar was received by nearly 11.00% out of 400 respondents, Table 3.

More than eighty percent of the respondents in Mehsana, 76% in rural and 64% in urban areas of Panchkula mentioned that they have not been given sugar by the ration shop. Similarly, 60% of the respondents from urban and 40% from rural areas of Valsad mentioned that they have been denied supply of sugar by the ration shop. The situation is different in Sonipat district of Haryana. Seventy per cent of the respondents from rural and eighty percent from urban areas of Sonipat received two to three kg of

sugar from the ration shops. The quantity of sugar supplied by the fair price shop to the PDS beneficiaries is of course very less in both the states and the probable reason could be that the fair price shop owners may have received less quantity from the supply department or the sugar may have been diverted to open market as observed in a study conducted by the Tata Economic Consultancy Services.<sup>9</sup> The diversion as per this consultancy services was varied for example; wheat 36.00%, rice 31% and sugar 23.00%. Agarwal (1980) stated that the PDS cannot be strengthened without assured supplies. The response has been far from satisfactory. It has failed to supply the allotted quotas of levy sugar to the states as a result of which most of them have failed to arrange for this supply through fair price shops.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 3: Quantity of Sugar Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quantity of Sugar	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Not given	88.00	82.00	76.00	64.00	28.00	18.00	40.00	60.00	58.50	56.00
Up to 1 Kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.00	8.00	2.00	2.00
1-2 Kg	6.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.00	16.00	6.00	5.00
2-3 Kg	2.00	6.00	24.00	36.00	70.00	80.00	20.00	12.00	29.00	33.50
3-4 Kg	2.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	12.00	2.00	4.00	2.50
4-5 Kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.50
5+ Kg	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.50

#### Quantity of Kerosene Oil

Kerosene oil was not given to 64.50% of the respondents in rural area and 52.50% in urban area out of 400 beneficiaries in the study area. Five to ten liters of kerosene oil was received by 35.50% of the respondents in urban area and 29.50% in rural area. Nearly 12.50% of the respondents in the study area received less than five liters of kerosene oil. Nearly half percent of the respondents in rural and 5.00% of the respondents in urban areas received more than ten liters of kerosene oil from the ration shop, Table 4.

Leaving urban area of Mehsana, more than 70% of the respondents mentioned that they were not supplied kerosene oil by the ration shop in the study area of Gujarat while in Panchkula 74% of the rural respondents and 66% of the urban respondents were also denied supply of kerosene oil. In regard to supply of kerosene oil to the PDS beneficiaries, the situation in Haryana is better than Gujarat because 74% of the urban respondents and 60% of the rural respondents in Sonipat district of Haryana stated to have received 5-10 liters of kerosene oil.

**Table 4: Quantity of Kerosene Oil Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quantity of kerosene Oil	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Not given	72.00	44.00	74.00	66.00	40.00	26.00	72.00	74.00	64.50	52.50
Below 5 Lit.	8.00	12.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	6.00	5.50	7.00
5-10 Lit.	18.00	28.00	16.00	24.00	60.00	74.00	24.00	16.00	29.50	35.50
10+ Lit.	2.00	16.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.50	5.00

### Quantity of Pulses

Nearly all the respondents (98%) from rural area and ninety four percent of the respondents from urban area mentioned that they have not been given pulses by the ration shop. Similarly, all the rural and urban respondents from Panchkula, Valsad, and rural Sonipat were also not supplied pulses by the ration shop. Twenty percent of the Sonipat urban respondents received three to four kg of pulses from the ration shop. It suggests that the shop keepers may not have received adequate quantity of pulses from the supply department or the shop keepers may have diverted the pulses to the open market. This needs to be verified by the state governments of Haryana and Gujarat, Table 5.

**Table 5: Quantity of Pulses Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quantity of Pulses	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Not given	92.00	98.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	78.00	100.00	100.00	98.00	94.00
Below 1 kg.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
2-3 kg	8.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.50
3-4 kg	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00

## QUALITY OF THE FOOD GRAINS AND OTHER ITEMS SUPPLIED BY THE FAIR PRICE SHOP

### Quality of Rice

Most of the respondents, (76.50% in rural area and 70.00% in urban area), did not purchase or were not given rice. Nearly 19.00% of the respondents graded the quality

of rice as good and 22.50% as normal. Nine percent of the respondents from the urban area and three percent from the rural area graded the quality of rice as poor. One fourth of the respondents from Gujarat reported that the quality of rice supplied by the FPS was good, Table 6.

In urban and rural Haryana, almost none of the respondents were supplied rice by the ration shop whereas it was 80% in rural and 72% in urban areas of Mehsana and 28% in rural and 10% in urban areas of Valsad. Half of the respondents from urban Valsad and 36% from the rural Valsad reported that the quality of rice supplied by the ration shop was normal in quality whereas nearly one fourth of rural Valsad and 28% of urban and 20% of rural areas of Mehsana reported that the quality of rice supplied by the ration shop was good. As majority of the PDS beneficiaries, above 70.00%, were not supplied rice and it is very difficult to judge the quality of rice supplied by the fair price shop was whether poor, normal or good.

**Table 6: Quality of Rice Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quality of Rice	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
NA	80.00	72.00	98.00	100.00	100.00	98.00	28.00	10.00	76.50	70.00
Poor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	36.00	3.00	9.00
Normal	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	36.00	50.00	9.50	13.00
Good	20.00	28.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	24.00	4.00	11.00	8.00

### Quality of Wheat

Nearly half of the respondents did not purchase or were not given wheat by the ration shop. Nearly thirty percent of the respondents reported that the quality of wheat supplied by the FPS was normal, whereas twenty one and half percent of the rural respondents and fifteen and half percent of the urban respondents reported that the quality of wheat supplied by the FPS was good, Table 7.

Fifty four percent each of the rural and urban respondents of Mehsana, 66% of the rural and 64.00% of the urban respondents of Panchkula, 60% of the respondents of urban Valsad and one fourth of the respondents of Sonipat mentioned that they were not supplied wheat by the ration shop. So the quality of wheat was immaterial to them. The respondents, 40% from rural and 28% from urban areas of Mehsana, 20% from rural and 8% from urban areas of Valsad and 10.00% from rural and 14.00% from urban areas of Panchkula reported that the quality of wheat supplied by the ration shop was good. 16% of urban Sonipat and 12% of rural Sonipat reported the quality of Wheat as poor. Whereas nearly half of the urban Sonipat respondents reported that the quality of wheat supplied by the fair price shop was normal.



**Table 7: Quality of Wheat Supplied by the FPS to the PDS beneficiaries**

Quality of Wheat	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
NA	54.00	54.00	66.00	64.00	26.00	22.00	40.00	60.00	46.50	50.00
Poor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	16.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	4.50
Normal	6.00	18.00	24.00	22.00	46.00	50.00	40.00	30.00	29.00	30.00
Good	40.00	28.00	10.00	14.00	16.00	12.00	20.00	8.00	21.50	15.50

### Quality of Sugar

Sixty percent of the urban respondents and 66.50% of the rural respondents did not purchase or were not given sugar by the ration shop out of 400 PDS beneficiaries. One fourth of the respondents graded the quality of sugar as normal and 23.50% graded the sugar as good quality out of 400 respondents. Around 4.50% of the respondents opined that the quality of sugar supplied by the fair price shop was poor Table 8.

The respondents about 88% from rural and 82% from urban areas of Mehsana and 72% from rural and 74.00% from urban areas of Valsad were not supplied sugar by the ration shops. Only 30% of the respondents from rural and 20% from urban areas of Sonipat were not supplied sugar by the ration shop whereas, in Panchkula, 76% of the rural and 64% of the urban respondents were not supplied sugar by the ration shop. The inter district variation in the supply of sugar that exists in the state of Haryana needs to be examined by the state Government.

**Table 8: Quality of Sugar Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quality of Sugar	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
NA	88.00	82.00	76.00	64.00	30.00	20.00	72.00	74.00	66.50	60.00
Poor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	14.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	3.50
Normal	8.00	8.00	12.00	28.00	48.00	52.00	14.00	12.00	20.50	25.00
Good	4.00	10.00	12.00	8.00	18.00	14.00	14.00	14.00	12.00	11.50

In Sonipat, nearly half of the respondents reported that the quality of sugar supplied by the ration shop was normal, whereas 14% of Sonipat urban respondents reported the quality of sugar as poor. 14% of the respondents each from urban and rural Valsad and urban Sonipat reported the quality of sugar as good. Only 4-18% of the respondents

from the study area mentioned that the quality of sugar was good. The quality of sugar supplied by the fair price shops in Haryana was better than Gujarat but the difference is not significant, (Table 8.)

### Quality of Kerosene Oil

For seventy three percent of the rural respondents and sixty and half percent of the urban respondents, quality of kerosene oil was not applicable to them as they did not purchase or were not given kerosene oil by the ration shop. Twenty and half percent of the urban respondents and fourteen and half percent of the rural respondents graded the quality of kerosene oil as good. Kerosene oil as of normal quality was graded by twelve percent of the respondents from rural areas and 17.50% from urban areas whereas around 2.00% reported that the quality of kerosene oil was poor (Table 9).

Nearly all the rural and urban respondents of Valsad, 72.00% of the rural and 44.00% of the urban respondents of Mehsana were not supplied kerosene oil by the ration shop. The respondents about 74.00% in rural Panchkula, 66.00% in urban Panchkula, 46.00% in rural Sonipat and 32.00% in urban Sonipat were not supplied kerosene oil by the ration shop or it was not applicable to them. More than half (52.00%) of the respondents from urban Mehsana, one fifth (18.00%) of the respondents from rural Mehsana, one fourth (24.00%) of respondents from rural Panchkula, one fifth (20.00%) of the respondents from urban Panchkula reported that the quality of kerosene oil supplied by the ration shop was good. 54.00% of the urban Sonipat and 38.00% of the rural Sonipat and 14.00% of the urban Panchkula reported the quality of kerosene oil as normal.

**Table 9: Quality of Kerosene Oil Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quality of Kerosene Oil	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
NA	72.00	44.00	74.00	66.00	46.00	32.00	100.00	100.00	73.00	60.50
Poor	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	1.50
Normal	8.00	2.00	2.00	14.00	38.00	54.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	17.50
Good	18.00	52.00	24.00	20.00	16.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	14.50	20.50

### Quality of Pulses

Nearly more than three fourth of the respondents did not purchase or were not given pulses by the ration shop. Of those who received pulses, twenty two and half percent from urban area and nineteen and half percent from rural area reported that the quality of pulses supplied by the ration shop was poor while it was graded as good by

1.50% of the rural respondents and 0.50% of the urban respondents. Also, the quality of pulses was graded as normal by 4.50% of the respondents from the urban area and 0.50% of the respondents from the rural area, (Table 10)

Nearly all the respondents from Panchkula, rural Sonipat and urban Mehsana and more than 90.00% of rural Mehsana and urban Sonipat respondents mentioned to have not received any pulses from the ration shop. Only in urban Valsad 88.00% of the respondents and 78.00% of the respondents from rural Valsad reported to have received pulses from the ration shop. In Valsad, 78.00% of the rural respondents and 88.00% of the urban respondents reported that the quality of the pulses supplied by the ration shop was poor. Only 6.00% of the respondents from rural Mehsana and 2.00% from urban Mehsana reported that the quality of pulse supplied by the fair price shop was good.

**Table 10: Quality of Pulses Supplied by the FPS to the PDS Beneficiaries**

Quality of Pulses	Mehsana (Gujarat)		Panchkula (Haryana)		Sonipat (Haryana)		Valsad (Gujarat)		Average	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
NA	92.00	98.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	92.00	22.00	0.00	78.50	72.50
Poor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	78.00	88.00	19.50	22.50
Normal	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	12.00	0.50	4.50
Good	6.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.50	0.50

In general, quality of commodities supplied by the fair price shops in both the states need improvement. The quality of each of the commodities varied, i.e. poor, normal and good as per the views of PDS beneficiaries. The probable reasons for poor quality according to Chattopadhyaya (1980) include: store the commodities for a very long time in poor environment, infestation, carelessness in handling, exposure and methods used in the course of distribution, poor storage facilities, unscientific preservation techniques, reckless application of disinfestations of agents like pests and rodents, etc.<sup>5</sup> Now what immediately can be possible by the states to protect the quality of the commodities supplied by the PDS is to take steps to improve the storage facilities and preservation techniques.

The investigators during their visit to the state of Haryana came across many cases of damaged/rotten food grains supplied to the consumers under PDS. When this issue was brought to the notice of the district level officials, they clarified that the quality of the food grains is ensured at the time of procurement, however, at some places the grain is damaged due to the non-availability of storage space with the procurement agency in Haryana. Now it should be made compulsory that the procurement agencies should have adequate space for storage. The Public Distribution

System Control Order, 2001 (Haryana) provides for the mandatory display of samples by the FPS dealer in his shop. This is essential to ensure that the same quality is being distributed by the FPS dealer which has been delivered by the wholesale agents. The state government of Gujarat may also devise its own mechanism to ensure the quality of commodities supplied under PDS is good.

## **CONCLUSION**

Data presented in Tables from 1 to 10 reveal a discouraging picture of the situation particularly with reference to the quantity and quality of food grains and other items supplied by the fair price shops to the PDS beneficiaries in Haryana and Gujarat.<sup>10</sup> Beneficiaries have been denied supply of essential commodities on account of one or the other reasons. For example, rice was not supplied to more than 80.00% of the beneficiaries in the study area and the quality of rice supplied was also just normal according to 9.50% of the rural and 13.00% of the urban respondents. In case of wheat, close to 50.00% of the respondents were denied supply by the fair price shops in the study area and the quality of wheat was considered to be normal as per the views of 29.00% of the rural and 30.00% of urban respondents. It was also considered as good quality by 21.50% of rural and 15.50% of the urban respondents in the study area. Two-third of the respondents were not supplied sugar by the fair price shops and the quality of sugar supplied was just normal according 20.50% of the rural and 25.00% of the urban respondents, however, 12.00% of the rural and 11.50% of the urban respondents judged that the quality of sugar supplied was good. Almost 70.00% of the respondents were denied supply of kerosene oil and more than 70.00% of the respondents were denied supply of pulses by the fair price shops in the study area. The quality of pulses supplied was poor, quoted by 19.50% of the rural and 22.50% of the urban respondents and the quality of kerosene oil varied from normal to good. In general, the quality of essential commodities supplied by the fair price shops in the study areas was only normal and the state governments of Haryana and Gujarat should take initiatives to improve the supply to more number of PDS beneficiaries as well as to improve the quality of the essential commodities supplied by the fair price shops.

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