



**A STUDY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS
PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
VELLORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU**



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ABSTRACT

Public Distribution System in India has been one of the most crucial elements in food policy and food security system in the country. The Public Distribution System (PDS) is a poverty alleviation program and contributes towards the social welfare of the people. PDS is considered as principal instrument in the hands of State Governments for providing safety net to the poor against the spiralling rise in prices of essential commodities. In this regard Tamil Nadu sets a model in implementing the PDS as universal system. Essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, and kerosene are supplied to the people under the PDS at reasonable prices. Rice is an important and stable food for poor people where PDS acts as a backbone for the ones below poverty line. The present paper discusses the present scenario of Public distribution system in Vellore District.

Key Words:- PDS, social welfare, women SHGs, transparency, accessibility, etc.,

INTRODUCTION

Public Distribution System (PDS) is a poverty alleviation programme and contributes towards the social welfare of the people. Essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar,

kerosene and the like are supplied to the people under the PDS at reasonable prices. PDS is a boon to the people living below the poverty line. PDS is the primary social welfare and antipoverty programme of the Government of India.

Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) has been initiated by the Government of India from the year 1992 in order to serve and provide essential commodities to the people living in remote, backward and hilly areas. Government introduced Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in the year 1997.

Central Government and State Governments have been actively involved in steering the operations for the success of the PDS. Tamil Nadu sets a model in implementing the PDS as universal system for the cause of eradicating poverty and improving standard of living of the people living below the poverty line. Timely supply of essential commodities is the basic element for the success of the PDS. Infrastructure i.e., Fair Price Shops (FPS), godown facilities and employees are other requisites of the PDS.

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN TAMILNADU

Public Distribution System is considered as principal instrument in the hands of State Governments for providing safety net to the poor against the spiraling rise in prices of essential commodities. In this regard Tamil Nadu sets a model in implementing the PDS as universal system. Here the involvement of the Cooperative Societies is noteworthy, since they cover more than 93 per cent of the FPS in Tamil Nadu. Further, the involvement of women SHGs in the distribution network ensures safety, transparency, and accessibility and above all reduced the transaction cost. Hence, this channel of distribution can be promoted. It was found in this study that problems like leakages, poor quality, under weightment, non-availability of controlled as well as non-controlled articles during certain times, non-availability of ration cards, bogus cards, etc., affect the efficiency of the system. Ensuring the availability of essential articles as per allotment as and when required by the cardholders, increased margin to cooperatives, and better salary to employees, reduction in the number of cards to be handled by a FPS, maintaining and updating the Notice Boards at every FPS, formation of vigilance committees at every FPS level and providing more role to women SHGs are the viable options put by the sample respondents to strengthen the PDS, which cannot be ignored. Further the continuance of Universal System will help to provide safety net to the poor against spiralling market prices of essential commodities.

TRANSPARENCY IN PDS STATUS VIA SMS

In Tamil Nadu, the food department has put in place a system whereby any ration cardholder can send an SMS with the FPS number to receive instant information regarding the stock of each PDS commodity available in that outlet. This is an impressive arrangement, which illustrates the scope for effective IT-based transparency measures using straightforward technology.

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN VELLORE DISTRICT

Public Distribution System (PDS) programme in Vellore District has been introduced for achieving multiple objectives. Its primary objective is to provide subsidised food grains and other items of daily necessity such as oil, sugar and Kerosene etc. to weaker sections of the population. The programme also aims to stabilise market prices of food grains in times of unusual inflationary tendencies, to provide food security to areas suffering from drought and similar natural calamities and manmade disasters, to provide support prices to farmers and to maintain buffer stock. The PDS programme is implemented in welfare state mode with universal beneficiary approach and hence it has been under criticism for being non-specific and wasteful. It has also been found to be an inadequate programme to fully address the food security problem of the poor and vulnerable. PDS is a centrally planned programme and each state in India implements the design set by the Central Government.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

P.S.George (1974) has attempted to analyze public distribution of food grains and their income distribution effects in Kerala. He has tried to estimate the possible impact of rationing on incomes of the consumers using the relationship. The results for Kerala suggest that the system is economically viable. Further, ration rice, according to this study, accounted for a major share of rice consumption of consumers belonging to low income groups. Subba Rao (1980) has attempted to estimate food requirement for the State of Andhra Pradesh under certain assumptions. While working out these estimates he has assumed a supply level of 12 ozs. (340 grams) per consumption unit. He concluded that ultimately the benefit of public distribution is zero or negligible.

Gupta basing on certain assumption has projected food grains requirements for PDS up to 1980, for all India, such projections are assumed to help policy makers in their procurement efforts. G.Suryanarayana undertook a study on “PDS in India – with reference to Andhra Pradesh” during 1985. The major finding of the study was urban people were

getting more benefits through PDS than rural and tribal people. A detailed study was published on “Food security and Targeted PDS in U.P”. The study was undertaken by Ravi Srivastaava and was published in March 2000. The study was carried among 2250 households across 120 villages found that multiplicities of agencies, poor coordination and low administrative accountability have combined to cripple the delivery machinery.

B. Ramaswami and P. Balakrishnan (2002): Since public intervention is a pervasive influence on food prices, this paper asks whether and how the inefficiency of state institutions matters to food prices. In the context of the wheat subsidy scheme in India, the paper models the implications of quality differences between public and private grain supply. As both are procured at similar prices, the lower quality of public grain marks the inefficiency of government operations. The paper proposes and empirically validates a method to test for demand switches that occur as a result of quality preference. As a result, a reduction in food subsidies increases food prices and hurts the poor even when they are not major recipients of the subsidy. This seeming paradox is contingent on the inefficiency of public interventions. Thus, the outcome will be different if the reduction in food subsidy were to be accompanied by reforms in the associated state agencies. Ruthu Kattumuri (2011): Performance of PDS not only varies across states but more so between rural and urban centers. Scaling up involvement of multiple stakeholders including teachers, parents, civil societies, private organizations and religious communities would enhance accountability and performance of PDS in India.

In its election manifesto, the political parties (AIADMK and DMK) promised that free rice will be given to all people, and this was implemented soon after the elections. The PDS is a very good media to reach the people easily by the political parties in the state, and it often stands first in the list of schemes as a mean to lure or attract voters. As per a subsequent government order, the Chief Minister made an electoral promise regarding the provisioning of free rice to be distributed from June 1 2011 after ensuring proper working of the PDS independent of the party voted to power.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the consumer satisfaction towards public distribution system in Vellore District.
- To know the perception of consumers towards public distribution system.
- To know the products those are frequently purchased by the consumers.

- To offer some suggestion to the government for betterment of public distribution system.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is based upon the consumer satisfaction towards the Public Distribution System in Vellore District. The study is used to identify the products that frequently by the consumer and to analyze the perception towards the product. To offer some suggestions to the betterment of the product in PDS.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The period of study nearly about 75 days was a little short for the investigator for an in depth study of the subject was not possible. There was certain degree of or reluctance shown by some consumers to answer for the questionnaire. Investigator not collected information's from consumers as they were busy because of some official matters. They were no available on their house. That was also one of the prime limitations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research of the study is descriptive. It mainly involves survey and fact-finding enquiry. The main objective of the descriptive is to describe the current state of affair, as it exists at present. In social science research we come across the “expost facts research” for descriptive research study. The research tool used in descriptive research is survey methods. In this study the facts given by the respondents in the questionnaire have been analyzed and some suggestions have been drawn. The research design specifies the methods for data collection and data analysis.

SAMPLE SIZE

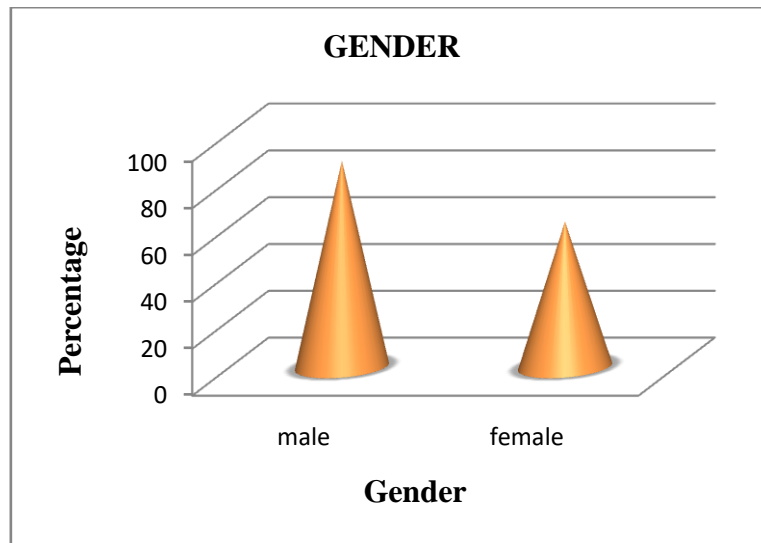
The sample size chosen for the study is 150. They were randomly chosen.

SAMPLING METHOD

Convenient sampling is the method adopted for the study. A sample from a population is said to be a convenient sample if every item of the population has equal chance for being selected.

DATA ANALYSE AND INTERPRETATION

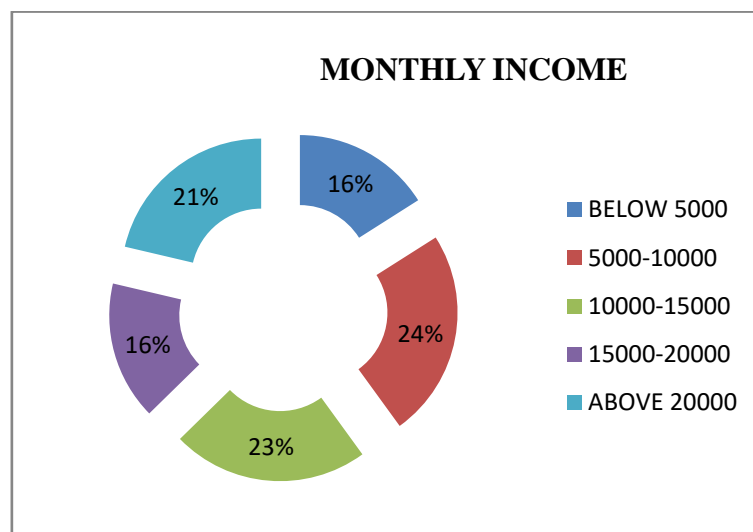
1. GENDER OF THE RESPONDENT



INTERPRETATION

From the above picture inferred that 58% of the respondents are male and 41% of the respondents are female.

2. MONTHLY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENT

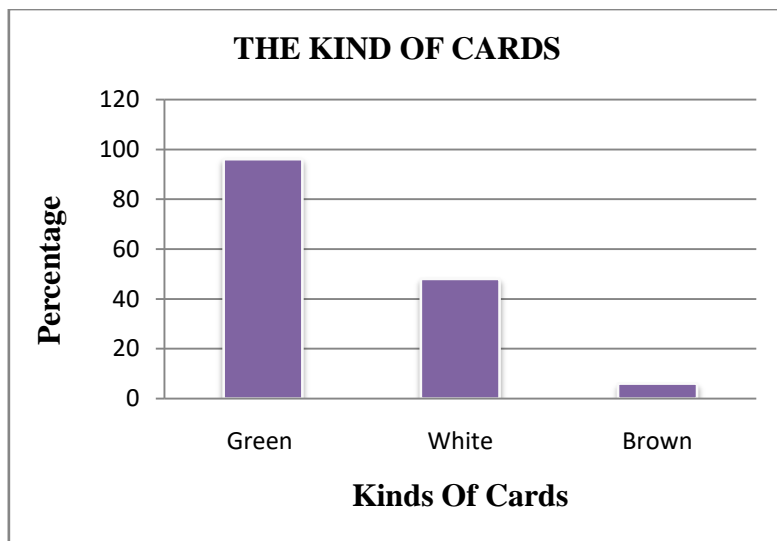


INTERPRETATION

From the above picture it is inferred that 24% of the respondents belong to the income level of below 5000-10000, 23% of the respondents belong to the income level 10000 to 15000, 21% of the respondents belong to the income level of above, where as 16% of the

respondents belong to the income level below 5000 and 16% of the respondents belong to the income of 15000-20000.

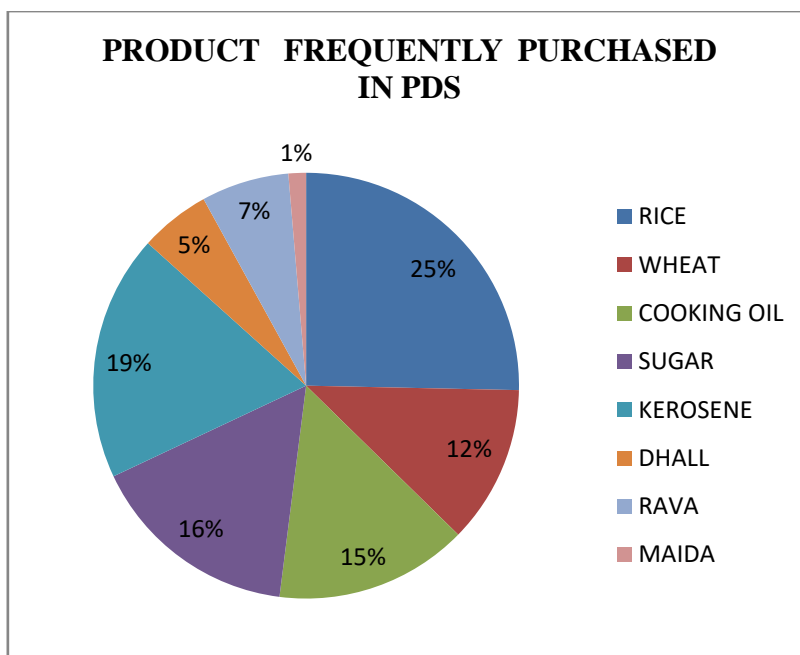
3. THE KIND OF CARD HOLDERS



INTERPRETATION

From the above picture it is inferred that 64 % of the respondents are green card holder, 32 % of the respondents are white card holder while the remaining 4% of the respondents are brown

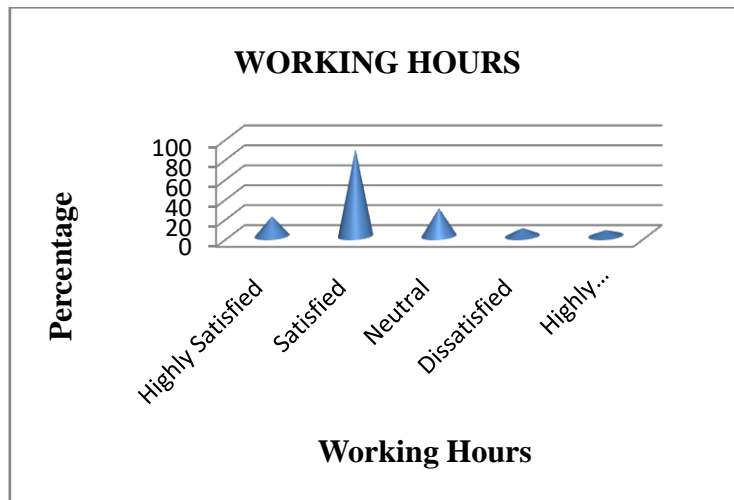
4. PRODUCTS FREQUENTLY PURCHASED BY THE RESPONDENT



INTERPRETATION

From the above picture it is clearly inferred that 25 % of the respondents are depend on rice , 19 % of the respondents are depend on kerosene oil, 16% of the respondents are depend on sugar ,15%of the respondents are depend on cooking oil , 12% of the respondents are depend on 7% of the respondents are depend on rava, 5 % of the respondents are depend on dhal and 1% of the respondents are depend on Maida.

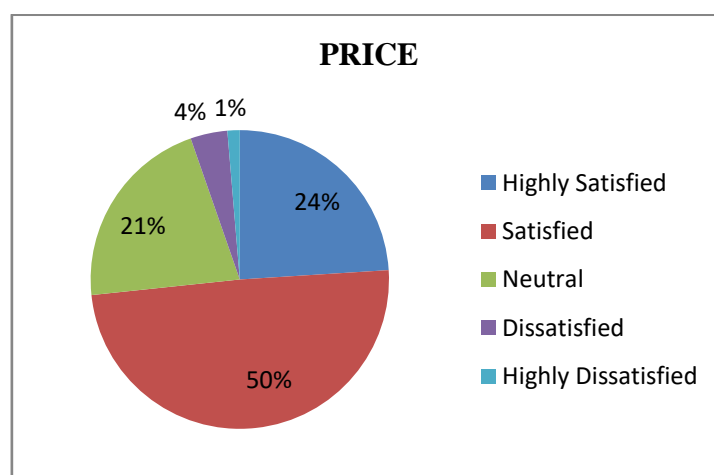
5. WORKING HOURS



INTERPRETATION

The above picture shows that 59% of the respondents are satisfied , 19% of the respondent are neutral , 13% of the respondent are highly satisfied , 5% of the respondent are dissatisfied , while the remaining 4% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied.

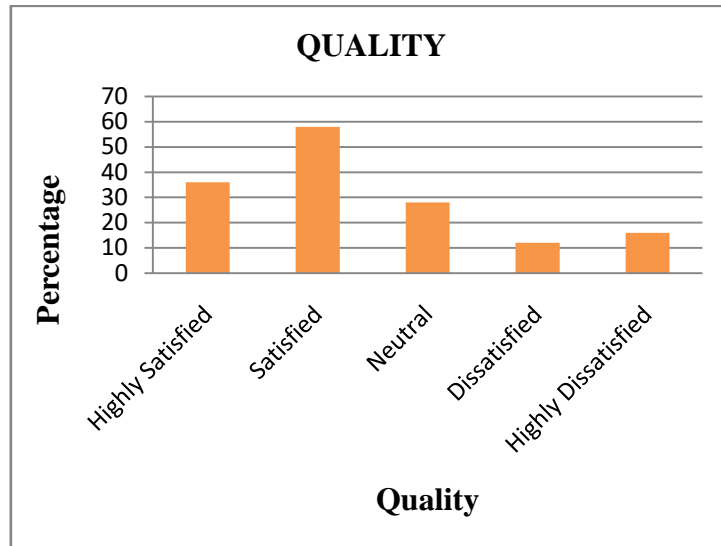
6. PRICE



INTERPRETATION

The above picture shows that 49% of the respondents are satisfied, 24% of the respondent are highly satisfied, 21% of the respondent are neutral, 4% of the respondent are dissatisfied, while the remaining 1% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied.

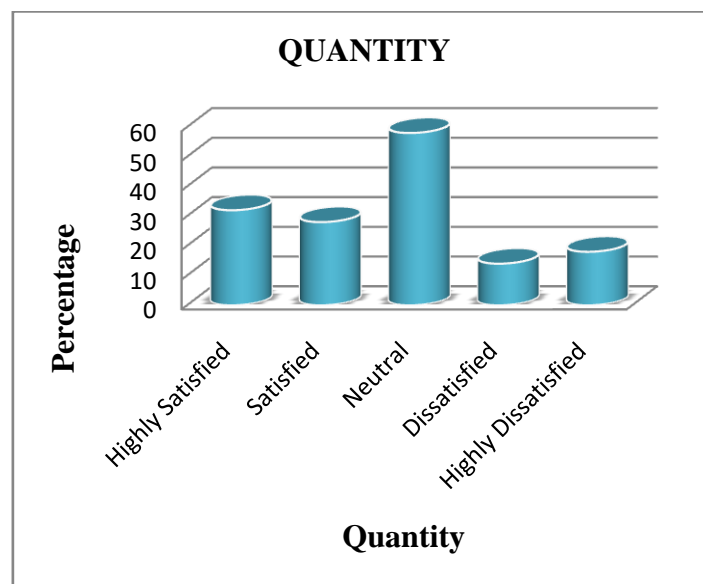
7. QUALITY



INTERPRETATION

The above picture shows that 39% of the respondents are satisfied, 24% of the respondents are highly satisfied and 19% are neutral about it, and 11% are highly dissatisfied, while the remaining 8% of the respondents are dissatisfied.

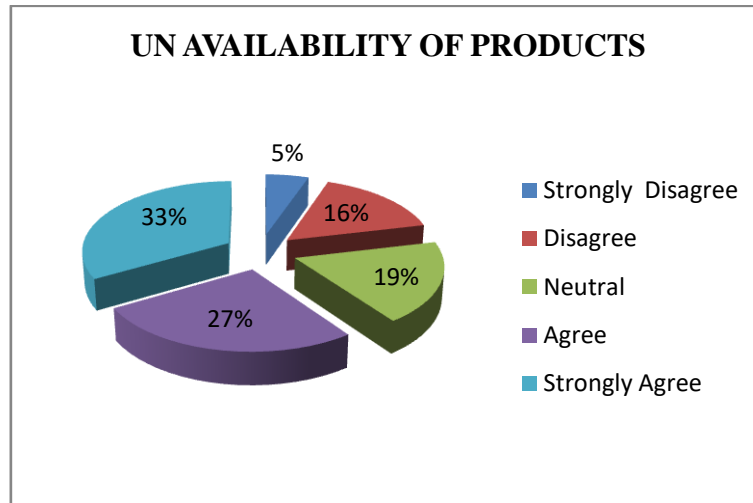
8. QUANTITY



INTERPRETATION

The above picture shows that 39% respondents are neutral, 21% are highly satisfied and 19% are satisfied about it, and 12% are dissatisfied, while the remaining 9% of the respondents are dissatisfied.

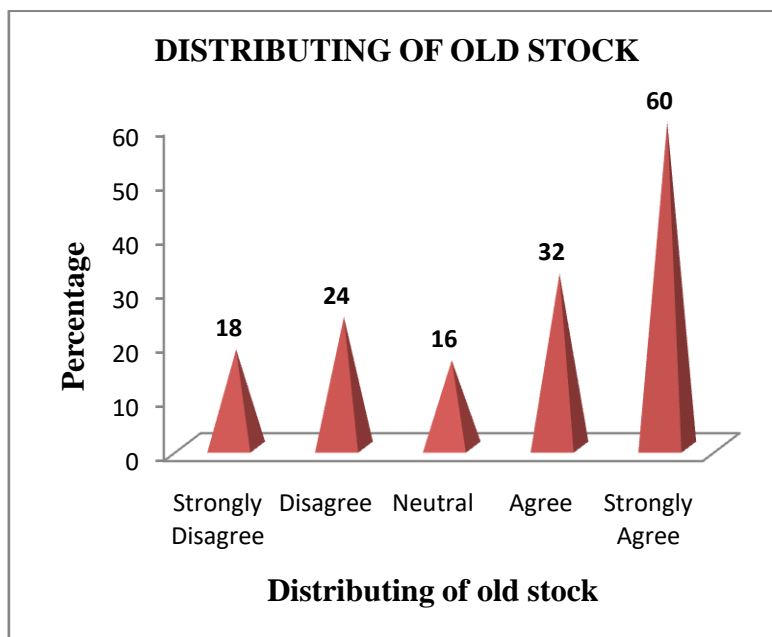
9. UN AVAILABILITY OF PRODUCTS



INTERPRETATION

The above picture shows that 33% respondents are highly agree, 27% are agree, 19% of the respondent are neutral about it, 16% are disagree, while the remaining 5% of the respondents are highly disagree.

10. DISTRIBUTING OF OLD STOCK



INTERPRETATION

The above picture shows that 40% respondents are highly agree, 21% are agree , 16% are disagree, 12% of the respondent are highly disagree, and while the remaining 11% of the respondent are neutral about it .

MAJOR FINDINGS

- ❖ Majority (45%) of the respondents are the age group of above 40.
- ❖ Majority (52%) of the respondents are married.
- ❖ Majority (45%) of the respondents are private employee.
- ❖ Majority(24%) of the respondents are the income level of 5000 to 10000
- ❖ Majority (64%) of the respondents are using green card.
- ❖ Majority (25%) of the respondents are frequently buy rice in Public distribution.
- ❖ Majority (25%) of the respondents are comfortable to buy product on Sunday.
- ❖ Majority (44%) of the respondents are satisfied with the stores conveniently located.
- ❖ Majority (59%) of the respondents are satisfied with the stores working hours.
- ❖ Majority (49%) of the respondents are satisfied with the price.
- ❖ Majority (47%) of the respondents are neutral with the service
- ❖ Majority (33%) of the respondents are neutral with the display of goods list.
- ❖ Majority (41%) of the respondents are satisfied with the festival offers.
- ❖ Majority (36%) of the respondents are disagree with the service provided in public distribution system.
- ❖ Majority (39%) of the respondents are satisfied with the quality.
- ❖ Majority (39%) of the respondents are neutral with the quantity.
- ❖ Majority (31%) of the respondents are agree with the low quality products.
- ❖ Majority (35%) of the respondents are strongly agreed with the improper quantity.
- ❖ Majority (23%) of the respondents are neutral with the proper balance amount.
- ❖ Majority (33%) of the respondents are strongly agreed with the unavailability of products.
- ❖ Majority (40%) of the respondents are strongly agreed with the distributing of old stock.
- ❖ Majority (36%) of the respondents are strongly agreed with the low response from store in charge.
- ❖ Majority (44%) of the respondents are strongly agreed with the long waiting hours in queue.

- ❖ Majority (32%) of the respondent are neutral with the enough store capacity.

SUGGESTION

The following suggestions are made for the consumer satisfaction towards public distribution system based on the findings of this study.

- The public distribution system department should take step to increase the performance of the public distribution system.
- The public distribution system department should allot separate date for separate wards.
- The public distribution system department should list out the price of all the product in public distribution system stores.
- The public distribution system department should periodically check the availability of the product in public distribution system stores.
- The quantity of the products distributed can be increased.
- The Quality of the rice can be increased.
- The public distribution should provide good quality products to the consumers.
- The public distribution system should reduce the waiting hours of the consumers
- The public distribution system should have an enough storage capacity.

CONCLUSION

The Government of TamilNadu took all efforts to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of essential commodities to the poor. The poor people are very satisfied and utilized the PDS to meet their private needs. Rural coastal people's lifestyle has improved and changed. Socioeconomic policies have made impact on the development of rural areas, particularly of coastal regions. However, as there is always room for improvement, modifying the existing policy may prove fruitful. Further, the involvement of women SHGs in the distribution network ensures safety, transparency, and accessibility and above all reduced the transaction cost. Hence, this channel of distribution can be promoted.

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