



**DETERMINANTS OF FREQUENCY OF VISIT AND
PURCHASE FROM PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM –
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE
DISTRICT, TAMILNADU**

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Abstract:

India, the second largest country in the world in population is rich in natural resources. It had seasonal rainfalls earlier. But later on due to failure of monsoon continuously, there arose the demand for food grains. In order to overcome the situation, the government of India divided the population into two categories: APL & BPL. APL was able to meet their daily requirements. But the BPL faced a lot of problems in meeting their daily requirements. In order to help the BPL families, the Govt. of India supplied food grains and other daily needs through a system called Public Distribution System (PDS). PDS is considered as a principle instrument in the hands of government for providing safety net to the poor. The system is mainly for protecting the poor, enhancing the nutritional status and generating a moderate influence on market prices.

Key Words: Government, PDS & Price

Introduction:

The distribution of food grains Fair Price Shops (FPS) was started. The PDS handles issue and management of ration cards (Family Card), allotment of essential commodities to Fair Price Shops (FPS or Ration shops), monitoring and supervising FPS. PDS in TamilNadu provides essential commodities to the public both in rural and urban area. The unique feature of PDS in this State is TamilNadu Civil Supplies Corporation, Cooperatives and women SHGs govern the entire network. No private dealer is allowed to run FPS. Moreover the distribution of the essential commodities are regulated by the Family Card System and the cardholders need not travel more than 2kms to reach their corresponding FPS. Around 35 kg of Free rice is offered to the Antyodaya Anna Yojana cardholders monthly, ½ kg of sugar per member per month, 3 to 5 ltrs of kerosene, lower prices for all other goods (such as palm oil, dhall, wheat, etc.,) are offered at the ration shops. Although the prices are lower when compared to other outside retail shops, many of the cardholders hesitate to purchase the ration products that is eligible to them. The reasons said were, poor quality, non availability of the goods, have to stand in queue for half a day which leads to loss of half a day salary, etc.,

Objectives:

- ✓ To make an attempt to study whether the cardholders purchase the items regularly or occasionally.

Methods:

Data Collection: Primary data was collected from the family cardholders of Coimbatore Dist., (Tamil Nadu) through Questionnaire and interview schedule. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the literates and interview schedule for illiterates.

Sampling: A total of 350 cardholders were selected by convenient random sampling method. 300 questionnaires were issued. Out of which 250 questionnaires were in usable form(50 being incomplete). Interview schedule was undertaken for 50 illiterate cardholders. Totally 250 + 50 questionnaires were taken for analysis purpose.

Determinants: The Level of frequency of visit and purchase has been measured by assigning scores to questions relating to frequency of visit and purchase by the cardholders. One question is included in the interview schedule namely, frequency of visit and purchase of goods from ration shop. Answer to this question have been rated on a three-point scale. Thus, the cardholders would get of maximum score of 24. If a cardholder is not eligible for an item, he gets a maximum score of 21 (i.e., 7 * 3=21). If he is not eligible for two items, his maximum score will be 18. Score obtained by each cardholder is divided by their maximum score (i.e., 24 or 21 or 18 etc.,) and multiplied by 100 to convert it into an index. This index is termed as ‘Visit Intensity Index’. The index ranges between 0 and 100 and the grand mean of Visit Intensity Index is 65.42. Eight variables have been taken to examine the frequency of visit and purchase of goods from ration shop. They are Age, Family Size, Employment Status, Family Income, Location of Shop, Mode of Transport, Personal Visit to Ration Shop and Satisfaction.

Age: Age is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders, who are young, may have lesser Intensity Index of PDS. Since, the young may not find the services and products in PDS, those provided by other shops. In order to examine the level of utilization, based on age, the cardholders are divided into three groups.

Table 1.1: Age and Visit Intensity Score

Age	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Up to 30 yrs	143 (47.67%)	59.65	60 (41.96%)	83 (58.04%)	0 – 100
31 – 50 yrs	151 (50.33%)	71.49	77 (50.99%)	74 (49.01%)	6.67 – 100
Above 50 Yrs	6 (2%)	50.3	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	0 – 93.34
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 – 100

The average Visit Intensity score is found to be high with those between the age group of 31 and 50. Hence it can be inferred that the middle aged persons utilize ration shops many more times than other age group persons.

Family Size: Family size is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders, who are with more number of family members, may use PDS than those having less number of family members, since more members require more quantity which can be offered only by ration shops at low rate. In order to examine the level of Visit Intensity, based on family size, the cardholders are divided into five groups.

Table 1.2: Family Size and Visit Intensity Score

Family Size	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
2	11 (3.67%)	60.37	6 (54.54%)	5 (45.45%)	0 -100
3	76 (25.34%)	61.43	33 (43.42%)	43 (56.58%)	0 – 100
4	93 (31%)	59.09	37 (39.78%)	56 (60.22%)	4.45 – 100
5	69 (23%)	74.14	36 (52.17%)	33 (47.83%)	0 – 100
6	51 (17%)	72.21	28 (54.90%)	23 (45.10%)	13.34 - 100
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 - 100

The average Visit Intensity score is found to be high with the five members' family. Hence it can be said that, as the family size increases, Visit Intensity Index also increases.

Employment Status: Employment status is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders, who are working as daily wage earners may have higher Visit Intensity Index, since they could not purchase from outside due to high price of goods and lack of sufficient money. In order to examine the level of Visit Intensity Score, based on employment status, the cardholders have been divided into eight groups.

Table 1.3: Employment Status and Visit Intensity Score

Employment Status	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Agriculture	71 (23.67%)	62.03	30 (42.25%)	41 (57.75%)	6.67 – 100
Business	52 (17.33%)	58.97	21 (40.38%)	31 (59.62%)	6.67 – 100
Government	40 (13.33%)	62.37	17 (42.50%)	23 (57.50%)	0 – 100
Private	43 (14.33%)	67.22	19 (44.19%)	24 (55.81%)	0 – 100
Professional	23 (7.67%)	64.00	9 (39.13%)	14 (60.87%)	4.45 – 100
Retired	13 (4.34%)	52.41	5 (38.46%)	8 (61.54%)	0 - 100
House wife	3 (1%)	54.00	2 (66.66%)	1 (33.34%)	40 – 61.90

Daily wage earners	55 (18.33%)	80.99	37 (67.27%)	18 (92.73%)	0 – 100
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 - 100

The Visit Intensity score is found to be high with the daily wage earners group. Hence it can be said that daily wage earners have more utilization than other group cardholders.

Family Income: Family income is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders with low income may have more Visit Intensity Index than other income groups, as they could not even meet the basic needs of life with their income. So they may not be able to get things from other sources than the ration shop, which provide goods at lower rates. In order to examine the level of Visit Intensity Index based on family income, the cardholders have been divided into four groups.

Table 1.4: Family Income and Visit Intensity Score

Family Income	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Below 25,000	103 (34.33%)	71.76	52 (50.49)	51 (49.51)	0 – 100
25,001 – 50,000	84 (28%)	63.88	38 (45.24)	46 (54.76)	6.67 – 100
50,001 – 1,00,000	67 (23.33%)	62.00	30 (44.78)	37 (55.22)	0 – 100
Above 1,00,000	46 (15.34%)	59.04	20 (43.48)	26 (56.52)	0 – 100
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 - 100

The Visit Intensity score is found to decrease along with increase in the annual income. Hence it can be said that lower income group are visiting the ration shops at high level than the other cardholders.

Location of Shop: Location of shop is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders may have high frequent visits, where the shops are nearer. If the ration shops are very far many cardholders will not tend to visit frequently. In order to examine the level of Visit Intensity Index based on the location of shop, the cardholders are divided into four groups.

Table 1.5: Location of Shop and Visit Intensity Score

Location of Shop	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Very Near	34 (11.34%)	69.84	16 (47.06%)	18 (52.94%)	0 – 100
Near	190 (63.34%)	64.68	87 (45.79%)	103 (54.21%)	0 - 100
Far	66 (22%)	68.08	31 (46.97%)	35 (53.03%)	4.45 – 100
Very Far	10 (3.34%)	46.89	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	13.34 – 75.56
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 – 100

The average Visit Intensity score is found to be high in the category, where the shops are very near. Hence it can be inferred that, if the shops are near the cardholders utilize more.

Mode of Transport: Mode of transport is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders, who have two - wheelers, may have high Visit Intensity Index as compared to others, who does not have two-wheelers. When the ration shops may be far, many would not wish to visit frequently and purchase the goods in the shop and prefer to go to other general stores which are near to their residence. In order to examine the level of Visit Intensity Index, based on mode of transport, the cardholders are divided into three groups.

Table 1.6: Mode of Transport and Visit Intensity Score

Mode of Transport	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
By Foot	205 (68.34%)	67.48	114 (55.61%)	91 (44.39%)	0 – 100
By Two – Wheeler	85 (28.34%)	82.88	18 (21.18%)	67 (78.82%)	0 – 100
By Bus	10 (3.33%)	44.84	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	6.67 – 93.34
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 – 100

The average Visit Intensity score is found to be high with those who go to the ration shops by two – wheeler. Hence it can be said that cardholders going to ration shops by two wheelers have more Visit Intensity than the others.

Personal Visit to Ration Shop: Visit in person to ration shop is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders, who are visiting by themselves, may have high Visit Intensity Index, as they come to know about availability and date of supply of goods. In order to examine, the level of Visit Intensity Index, based on visit in person, the cardholders are divided into two groups.

Table 1.7: Personal Visit to Ration Shop and Visit Intensity Score

Person Visit to Ration Shop	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Yes	274 (91.34%)	66.89	124 (45.26%)	150 (54.74%)	4.45 – 100
No	26 (8.67%)	49.96	16 (61.54%)	10 (38.46%)	0 – 100
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 – 100

The average Visit Intensity score is found to be high with those who visit the ration shop in person. Hence, it can be said that the cardholders visiting in person are having more Visit Intensity Index than others.

Satisfaction: Satisfaction is likely to have an association with Visit Intensity Index. Cardholders, who are highly satisfied, may have high Visit Intensity Index. Since, one who have satisfaction with a shop will like to visit it frequently. In order to examine the level of Visit Intensity Index, based on satisfaction level, the cardholders are divided into three groups.

Table 1.8: Satisfaction and Visit Intensity Score

Satisfaction	No. of Card Holders	Average Visit Intensity Score	Above Average	Below Average	Range
Low	14 (4.67%)	35.40	10 (71.43%)	4 (28.57%)	0 – 62.23
Moderate	252 (84%)	68.57	117 (46.43%)	135 (53.57%)	4.45– 100
High	34 (11.33%)	54.41	13 (38.24%)	21 (61.76%)	6.67 – 100
Total	300	65.42	140	160	0 – 100

The average Visit Intensity score is found to be high with medium level of satisfaction score. Hence, it can be said that the cardholders having medium level of satisfaction have high Visit Intensity Index.

Findings:

It is observed that middle aged persons (31-50 years) visit regularly and purchase the goods offered at the ration shops than other aged persons. Visit intensity index is found to be high among the family whose size is 5 in number. Also daily wage earners, who are the real BPL families, have high intensity index which shows that they are fully depending on FPS. Intensity index is found to be decrease along the increase in annual income. Also where the ration shops are very near and those who go by two wheeler have high intensity index. Whereas when the head of the family visits in person to ration shop to purchase the goods, the index is higher. Also those who have moderate and high level of satisfaction towards the quality, quantity of goods, behavior of the staffs, etc., have high intensity index.

Suggestions:

Government should come forward to open the ration shops till 7.00p.m, so that the daily wage earners need not lose their half a day salary. Additional counters can be introduced at more crowded time. Also the quantity of goods can also be increased. Where the ration shops are near, the index is found to be high, so more number of ration shops can be opened. The index is found to be low for those who have low level of satisfaction. Hence the quality of the goods, quantity and behavior of the staffs should be improved.

Conclusion:

Some of the determinants have significant association with the Visit Intensity Index. They are, Family Size, Employment Status, Family Income, Mode of Transport, Visit in Person to Ration Shop and Satisfaction. These variables influence the frequency of purchase of goods in ration shop. Thus it can be concluded that when there is increase in the family size the dependence on the ration shop rises. Also employment status and family income of a family makes the cardholders to depend more on ration shops. It should also be noted that mode of transport and visit in person to the ration shops influences the frequency of purchase.

Satisfaction towards the price, quality and quantity also makes the cardholders to purchase frequently in the ration shops. Hence the government has to continue this kind of grains distribution to the public regularly at concession rates.

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