

“Public Distribution System in Berhampur needs more reform to become Pro-poor”

Corruption and lack of accountability still exists in Public Distribution System

Youth for Social Development, a research based NGO with the support from Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore conducted second community social audit on functioning of Public Distribution System in 10 selected slums in Berhampur city.

The community social audit process begun with the training of 15 citizens to conduct beneficiary interview and check PDS shop compliance to government guidelines using social accountability tools (form-0 to form-7). They conducted interview of 265 PDS beneficiaries, 266 PDS non-beneficiaries, 8 PDS shop owners, 10 corporators, 3 CSD officials checked 8 Fair Price Shops and also verified records maintained by FPSs. YSD conducting ‘Public Hearing’ to disseminate the findings and also interface meeting with CSD officials and shop owners.

Major Findings (beneficiaries)

- Among the beneficiaries interviewed more than half (56%) of the respondents have BPL cards, 36% have Antodaya cards and only 7% are APL card holders.
- Nearly one fifth of the households (19.6%) paid bribe to get their ration cards from the government and average amount of Rs. 300.
- 27% of the households are not getting commodities as per their entitlements.
- Among them 20% of the HHs reported differences in rice, 32% households reported differences in wheat, 37% reported differences in sugar and 11% reported difference in rice entitlements.
- More than half of (67.5%) the households find the shop at their convenient location. The average distance remains at less than a kilometre (800 meters).
- 96.6% of the households reported there is always long queue and more than half of (57.9%) the households reported it takes more than one hour to collect rationed items from the shop.
- 18% of the respondents complained on differences of quantity of commodities supplied to them. 3-5 kilograms in rice, 100-200ml in kerosene oil and 200-400 grams in sugar and wheat.
- Only more than half of (65.4%) the households are satisfied with the quantity available in the ration shop.
- More than half of (50.8%) the households complained on the quality of the rationed items by bad odour, bad taste, bad colour and mixed with small stones and other elements and 27.4% of the households reported delay in supply of commodities.
 - 61.7% reported the delay happens at the PDS shop level and 38.2% reported the delay at the food and civil supply department level.
 - More than 80% of the households reported that they are not allowed to take their rationed items on instalment basis..
 - 18.9% of the HHs very much dissatisfied by the behaviour of the shop keeper.
 - 18.3% households find the shop opening times are not suitable to them and the shops are not regular.
 - 16% of the households complained regarding the bad quality of the rationed items.
 - 72.1% of the households reported the quantities supplied are insufficient to their need.

Shop Owners

Most of the shop owners faced problems in running the ration shops including;

- Almost all the FPS shop owners are not able to bear the expenditure incurred for running FPS (i.e. transportation, shop rent, electricity, record maintenance, assistant's salary and stationary etc.)
- The commissions shop owners receive for the distribution of rationed items are insufficient to run the FPS shop. Moreover, shop owners experience delays in receipt of their commissions.
- The shop owners criticized officials and the wholesale distributors at the sub-divisional and state level for lack of transparency and accountability regarding the smooth functioning of PDS.
- Specifically, the shop owners complained that there is a difference between the actual quota they receive and what is recorded on the official receipt they are obliged to sign. This difference amounts to approximately 4-5 kilograms in any given bag of rice.

Checking of PDS Shops

- 60% PDS shops open two times in a day that is 8am to 10am in the morning and 5pm to 8pm in the evening and most of them open 5-6 days in a week.
- Most of the shops have display board in their shops that is in Oriya language and the registration number and name of the shop owners.
- No shop has displayed the name and phone number and visiting time and date of the civil supply inspector, the stock position of commodities, the official price list of different commodities, total number of beneficiaries and name and phone number of CSO officials.
- No one has displayed the sample of different commodities, the complaint book and name and address of the vigilance committee members.

Suggestions

- Ensure regularly and timely opening of PDS Shop, timely supply and installment facilities to buy ration items to the urban poor
- Quality of the rationed items should be good and sufficient quantity to be supplied (sugar, wheat) to the BPL families and BPL rice (25 kg) also to be supplied to APL families
- Issues of ration cards to all eligible families and reject the bogus and ineligible BPL cards
- Display of all information in the Citizen Informative Board at the shop level specifically display of sample and complaint address and phone number
- Strict Monitoring by the supply inspector and Retail Level Committee and Town Level Committee
- Monthly remuneration to cover the expenditures to run FPS to the shop owners and the rationed items they receive should supply to their shop directly.
- Transparency and accountability should be maintained at the wholesaler and official's level.
- Sufficient staff to the CSO dept. and more infrastructure and budget provision to effective implementation of PDS.

A Public Hearing on PDS has been conducted at Utkal Asram Bhawan, Ganjam Kala Parishad on 26 April, 2011 at 3pm to disseminate the findings to the beneficiaries, CSD officials, corporators and to the media. In this occasion Asst. Civil Supply Officer, Berhampur Mr. M. S Roy, Vice-president Dealers Association Berhampur Mr. Bhaskar Sahu and senior Corporator Mr. Ashok Shukla present in this occasion to listen the grievances and more than 58 beneficiaries present to share their experiences and problems.

For more details please contact



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