

Chapter 11 Quality Control and Quantitative discrepancies

The State Government appoints nominees for lifting of allocated foodgrains from FCI to FPS. Before making the payment to FCI, a joint inspection of stock is conducted by the FCI representative along with the State nominees to check the quantity received and whether it conforms to the prescribed quality specifications. At the district level, the district administration and the district supply offices were entrusted to conduct physical verification of the stock allocated to ensure that foodgrains were not substituted, adulterated or diverted and to restrict the occurrence of theft.

Scrutiny revealed that the lifted from FCI, Dimapur did not bear any seal samples of the quality despatched by FCI. Though a Lab Assistant was appointed in the district supply offices, the Department did not have any equipment to determine the quality of foodgrains received to conduct quality check of foodgrains delivered to the beneficiaries. The Department also transferred the foodgrains to FPS in terms of bags instead of measuring by use of beam scale which indicated that poor scaling mechanism existed in the Department.

No assurance memo about issue of quality foodgrains conforming to the standard as laid down under the Prevention of the Food Adulteration Act, 1954 could be found on record.

Joint physical verification of godowns at Tuensang, Zunheboto and Dimapur revealed that the rice bag supplied by the stockist weighed only between 40-48 Kgs against the standard bag content of 50 kg.

It was further seen at district godown, Tuensang that two bags of rice meant for Annapurna beneficiaries were decomposed beyond human consumption. The Department officials accepted the facts.

Rice bags with weight of 40-45 kg in the godown at Zunheboto and Tuensang *Photo 26*
September 2010

Non-consumable rice in the godown at
Tuensang *Photo 30* *September 2010*



Rice bag weighs 48 in the bag of 50 kg sold out from godown at Tuensang Photo dated 7.7.2011



Rice bag weighs 48 in the bag of 50 kg sold out from godown at Dimapur



Thus, due to non-existence of quality investigation equipment, gauging machines and other equipment for quality investigation, the Management failed to maintain the prescribed quantity and quality control of TPDS distributed to the bonafide beneficiaries through FPSs.

While accepting the facts (December 2011) the Department stated that procurement of digital weighing machine was under process and matter had been taken up with the FCI in respect of quality issue.

11.1. Substandard status of Godown

During joint physical verification of district Godown, Zunheboto, it was noticed that physical status of the godown was very poor and there was water logging inside the godown and was, therefore not fit for storing foodgrains. A theft case of 2.2 MT BPL rice from the godown in 2007-08 was also reported by the ADS, Zunheboto which is under investigation since last 3 years. Thus, poor management of Departmental godowns invited the prospect of pilferage of foodgrains from the district godowns.

Department accepted the facts (November 2011) in exit meeting.

11.2 Unauthorised storage of foodgrains in rented Godown

As per report furnished (September 2010) by the Director, FCS, the functional godown in Tuensang having a capacity of 50 MT was in good condition. However, during joint physical verification (October 2010), it was seen that the district godown was rented in a private building having 30 MT capacity since July 2010 as the departmental godown was not fit for storage. Hiring of rented godown was discontinued from November 2010. Hiring of rented godown without prior approval of the competent authority and misreporting of the status of the godown and illegal storage of foodgrains in private building need to be investigated.

Unauthorised occupancy of rented godown at Tuensang HQ (Photograph dated 29.9.2010)



While accepting the facts (December 2011) the Department stated that unauthorised storage of foodgrains in hired godown had been discontinued.

Conclusion

The Department was not equipped to gauge the quantity of foodgrains delivered by the stockist. Though a lab assistant was engaged for quality control investigation, the official did not conduct any investigation during the period covered in audit due to lack of necessary equipment. In the absence of gauging machines and other quality investigation equipment, the foodgrains were being distributed to the beneficiaries without ascertaining the exact weight and quality.

Recommendation

For better management of TPDS in the State, the Government should develop a mechanism to gauge and ensure equitable distribution of foodgrains without compromising the quality.