

A Scene at The Ration Depot

Essay No. 01

A ration depot is a place where controlled commodities of daily use are supplied to the people at normal rates fixed by the government. It has become almost a haunted place in these days of soaring prices. People carrying ration cards in their hands are seen standing in a line before the ration depot. Sometimes, they reach the place before the opening of the depot. There is heard a loud roar when the depot holder comes in sight. He takes some time in arranging his register and weights. He then starts entering the ration cards and receiving money. The quantity of items allotted is written on a slip of paper. The card-holder gets this slip and goes to second man who examines the slip and weight out the required quantity. The depot holder thus attends to one card-holder at a time. People have to stay in the queue for a long time. Children and women can be seen standing in sun or shower. Housewives are often tired of standing in the long queue. Sometimes, there is created a scene at the ration depot. Some card-holders try to present their cards out of turn. Others do not let them do so. At times the police have to be called to control the situation. Many a time, the depot holders indulge in black marketing. They try to put the customers off on one pretext or the other. Those who do not get their items have to go back disappointed. In fact, the rationing system needs to be re-examined and made more efficient.

Essay No. 02

A Scene at a Ration Depot

The importance of ration depots has greatly diminished in certain areas. It is because those who have gas connections cannot get kerosene from the ration depots now. Similarly, the supply of other commodities like sugar, Atta, pulses, cloth, etc. is limited to only those who are below the poverty line and have a yellow ration card. At many places, indeed, ration depots have been discontinued or shut down.

Still, wherever ration depots are operative, the scene is somewhat similar. I have a yellow card as my income is much below the average national per capital income. So, I have to visit the ration depot frequently, I mean, every month to get ration.

Yesterday, I went to Ration Depot No. 5 which is attached to our ward and is situated on the main road. I saw two long queues of people there. One queue was meant for men and the other for women. Some people had cans in their hands for getting kerosene oil.

When my turn came, I got the ration and left for home. However, during all this period when I was there, I observed certain things.

I saw sacks of wheat, Atta, sugar, pulses, etc. in the main room where the ration holder and his servants were sitting.

One of the servants got the card from me and made entries in the card. Before that the ration holder collected money from me and gave me a slip on which were written quantities for the different commodities that were to be given to me.

The second servant weighed each commodity and gave the same to me which I put in my bag. All the customers were treated in the same manner. I, however, learnt from some other customers that at times the depot holder declared wrongly that a particular commodity was out of stock as he sold it in the black market. Sometimes, the second servant, on instructions from his master, gave short measures. I decided to confirm these reports and if I found them correct, to lodge a complaint against the depot holder to the District Food Supply Officer.