

K.Vijayan of Thirumalnatham near Sholavandan in Vadipatti block says, “Only the agriculture officials know the paddy acreage in their respective areas and they are the right persons to suggest on the exact number of DPCs to be opened and not the TNCSC officials.” However, former Additional Director of Agriculture S. Kanagaraj says opening more DPCs will mean more expenditure on infrastructure and manpower to the government. If paddy procurement is to be handed over to the Agriculture department as per the wish of farmers, the TNCSC can just take care of storage in their open yards at Kappalur and Austinpatti and other locations, including the godowns of Agriculture Marketing Committee in the 13 blocks.

In collusion

Farmers say ruling party functionaries are against opening more DPCs as they are in collusion with paddy merchants and rice mill owners. Anthony Pitchai of Kannanendal says DPCs did not start functioning in many villages even after harvest was over and farmers had to keep paddy in the open. Only after forceful representation from farmers’ associations and intervention of the Collector, officials relented and opened the DPCs after three days. According to a TNCSC official, 33,000 tonnes of paddy were procured this season and ₹25.06 crore will be credited to the farmers’ bank accounts. Two open yards are coming up at Tiruvadavur and Idayapatti with a capacity to store 10,000 tonnes. However, if the yield from the more than a lakh hectares of both single and double crops are taken into account, it will reveal that only 30% of it has been procured by the government and the rest was dealt by paddy merchants. Rice mill owners in Keerathurai have done a good business this season thanks to a good monsoon. And the farmers still nurse a hope that more DPCs will be opened, at least from the next season.

[Source: The Hindu, March 16, 2020 \(verbatim reproduced\)](#)