The Impact of National Food Security Act-2013 on the Public Distribution System: A Case Study of Kerala State

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Abstract: The Public Distribution System in India is an important food security system that supplies basic food and non food commodities to the needy section of the society at affordable prices. It is also a part of India's agricultural policy. Also PDS supports farmers by providing a steady price to their crops at the time of harvest. The system is often criticized for not achieving the objectives for which it was formed. Corruption and black marketing were associated with the name of PDS several times. Many steps were taken by the government to improve the efficiency and smooth running of PDS. National Food Security Act 2013 was passed by the India government on 10th September 2013 with the objective to provide legal right to food to the poorer section of the society. But for various reasons the Act was implemented in Kerala by the month March 2018. This study analyses the impact of National Food Security Act-2013 on Public Distribution system in the state Kerala.

Index Terms: PDS-Public Distribution System, APL, BPL, Fair Price Shops (FPS), FCI-Food Corporation of India, NFSA-National Food Security Act.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public Distribution System (PDS) was introduced by India government to abolish scarcity of food grains. PDS supports the consumers from price rise by providing them cheap food grains. The major commodities supplied by the public distribution system are rice, wheat, kerosene, sugar etc... PDS has become one of the most important policies of India government. The Central government and the State government share the responsibility of smooth running of PDS. PDS includes a chain of shops called Fair price shops or Ration shops, through which the consumers can buy food grains at affordable prices, using their ration cards. The Central government has the responsibility to collect the food grains from the farmers and to allocate it to the states. Thus it is also a part of India's agricultural policy. The central government procures food grains from the farmers at a minimum support price (MSP) through the Food Corporation of India (FCI). The state governments share the responsibility of identification of the needy people, the distribution of ration cards and the distribution of ration items among them. Various plans are being introduced to streamline the PDS and to improve its efficiency. Till 1992 PDS was having a general

form which considered all its consumers equally without any specific targets. In 1992 it got revised and became RPDS (Revamped public distribution system) to focus on the poor section of the society. In 1997 RPDS became TPDS (targeted public distribution system) which divided the households into APL (above poverty line) and BPL (below poverty line) to supply subsidized food grains among the needy people. Antyodaya Anna yojna was launched in 1st April 2000 to support the poorest among the poor. National Food Security Act-2013 is the last among them. The act was passed as a bill in the parliament on 10th September 2013 and it aims to provide legal right to food to the poor. As per the provision of the bill, it is proposed to provide food grains under TPDS at a subsidized prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains among the needy people. Approximately 75% of rural and 50% of urban population receive the benefits of this act.

II. SALIENT FEATURES OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT

• Priority households are entitled to 5 kg of food grains per month, and Antyodaya households to 35 kg per household per month

. • Women Empowerment: Eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above to be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing of ration cards.

• Consumers can purchase the subsidized items from any fair price shops using his/her ration card. Thus the consumers can boycott any shops for its unfriendly behavior

. • All the fair price shops have installed electronic Point of sale (ePos) devises to ensure computerized services

III. PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN KERALA

The Civil supplies department is mainly concerned with the implementation of schemes connected with distribution of Rice, Wheat, Sugar and Kerosene. The state follows Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The stock of PDS items allotted by the Central Government is distributed on the basis of family

Ration Cards. The families are categorized as Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL).

The consumers are categorized as follows

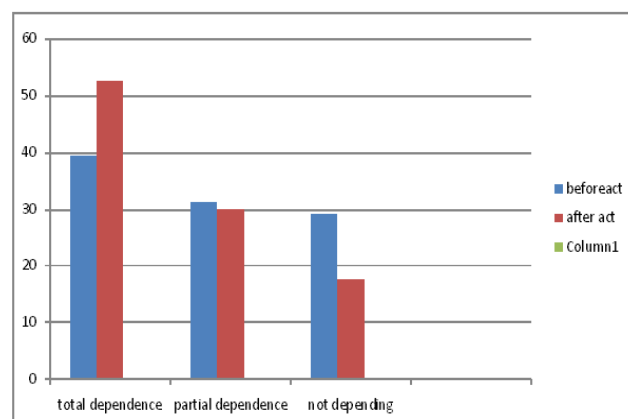| Ration card color	Beneficiaries	Benefits
Yellow card	Most economically backward section of society Antyodaya Anna Yojana	35 kg food grains per month free of cost. 1 kg sugar at the rate of Rs.21 and 500milli liter kerosene at the rate Rs.33 per liter
Pink card	Priority or Below Poverty Line (BPL)	4 kg rice and 1 kg wheat per head per month at the rate of Rs.2/kg and 500millilitre kerosene at the rate of Rs.33 per liter.
Blue card	Non Priority Subsidy or Above Poverty Line(APL)	2 kg rice per head per month at the rate of Rs.4/kg. 3 kg wheat flour per month at the rate of Rs.17/kg
White card	Non Priority	4 kg rice per card at the rate of Rs.11 per kg , 3 kg wheat flour per card at the rate of Rs. 17/kg
Annapurna scheme	Citizens above the age 65 who do not have any source of income	10 Kg. food grains per month free of cost.

IV. DATA

The primary data is collected by a field survey from the two neighboring districts Ernakulum and Thrissur in Kerala. 160 households were considered altogether, in which 78 households were APL and 82 were BPL. Two separate questionnaires were prepared to collect the data before and after the implementation of National Food Security Act-2013.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table:1 Respondents dependence on TPDS for their dietary needs.

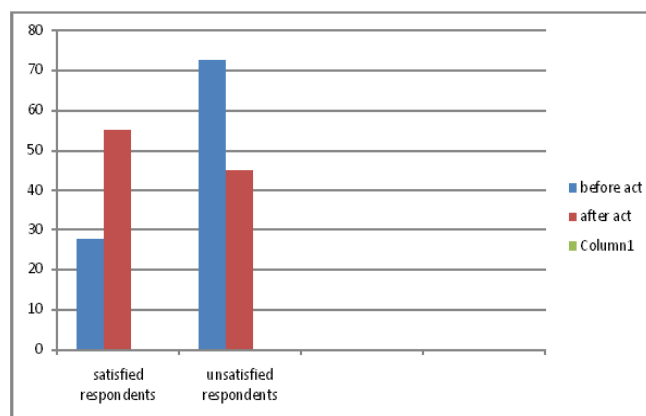| Respondent	Before the implementation of Act	%	After the implementation of Act	%
Totally depending	63	39.4	84	52.5
Partially depending	50	31.3	48	30
Not depending	47	29.3	28	17.5
Total	160	100	160	100

Graphical   representation

It can be seen that the number of consumers depending totally on the PDS for their dietary needs has increased by 13.1% after the implementation of National food security act 2013, while the partial dependence and the non-dependence has decreased.

Table:2-Respondents satisfied with the quality of food grains

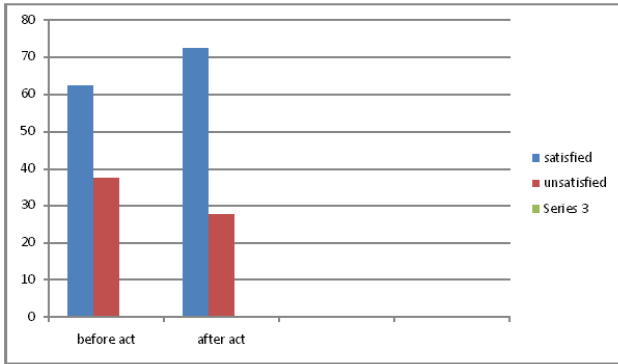| Respondent	Before the implementation of Act	%	After the implementation of Act	%
Satisfied	44	27.5	88	55
Unsatisfied	116	72.5	72	45
Total	160	100	160	100

Graphical   representation

It can be seen that the consumers are more satisfied with the quality of food grains after the implementation of National food security act-2013

Table 3: respondents satisfied with the quantity of food grains

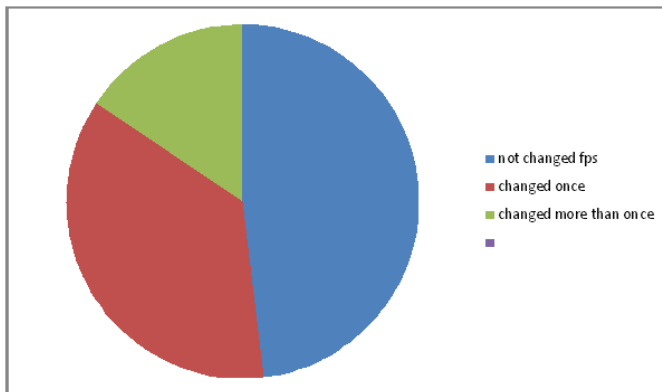| Respondent	Before the implementation of Act	%	After the implementation of Act	%
Satisfied	100	62.5	116	72.5
Unsatisfied	60	37.5	44	27.5
Total	160	100	160	100

Graphical representation

It can be seen that the consumers are more satisfied with the quantity of food grains after the implementation of National food security act-2013

Table 4: respondents who have switched to other shops

Number of respondents who have not changed FPS	Number of respondents who have changed FPS once	Number of respondents who have changed FPS more than once	Total number of respondents
77	58	25	160

It can be seen that after the implementation of NFSA many consumers have started switching to other fair price shops either because of their convenience or because of the unfriendly behavior of the staff

VI. CONCLUSION

The study shows that the NFSA-2013 has a positive impact on Public Distribution System. The number of consumers depending totally on PDS has increased while the partial dependence and not dependence has decreased. Consumers are more satisfied about the quantity and quality of the commodities supplied through the fair price shops.

Suggestion for the improvement of PDS

a. Server capacity should be refined in order to reach the remote villages of the state.

b. The efficiency of the ePoS machines should be increased to ensure uninterrupted service.

c. Inclusion-exclusion errors in the categorization of APL and BPL should be minimized.

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PUBLICATIONS-

[1] K.Amrita Haridas , Sajisha Sajeevan , Sanooja Sadique and Ambili S Nair , Performance of Targeted Public Distribution System as a means of food security: A case study of Kerala state. International journal for pure and applied mathematics; volume 114No.12, 2017, 163-170

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