

**A STUDY ON THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
SYSTEM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RURAL
AREA**



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ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), ERNAKULAM

MARCH 2022



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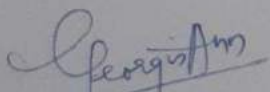
Thesis submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam in *fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology*

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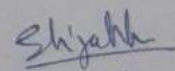
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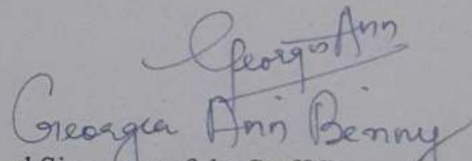



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MARCH 2022

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled “ A STUDY ON THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RURAL AREA” is a record of bonafide research work carried out by SREELAKSHMI V S under my guidance and supervision. The thesis is worth submitting in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.


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Ernakulam
March 2022



Sreelakshmi V S

DECLARATION

I, **SREELAKSHMI V S** hereby declare that the thesis entitled "**A STUDY ON THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RURAL AREA**" is a bonafide record of independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **GEORGIA ANNA BENNY**. I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of my degree, diploma, associateship or other similar title.

ERNAKULAM
MARCH 2022



SREELAKSHMI V S

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

One of the main physiological needs of human being irrespective of their class and status is food. The basic requirement like clothing, shelter and access to food is mandatory for every person in the society. Thus food is considered as the basic requirement for the existence of human beings and every individual owns a fundamental right to be free from hunger. Thus, Food Security is determined as a basic element that eliminates poverty through the assurance of food grains available to households both financially and physically while economic growth is the most important factor to achieve the sustainable development by reducing the poverty and through attainment of self sufficiency in food. Food security and economic growth interact with each other in a mutually reinforcing process over the course of development.

According to World Bank 1986, the term Food Security defined as “access by all people at all times to sufficient food for an active and healthy life”

World Food Summit (1996), defined Food Security as “When all the people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary need and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.

Food Security

Food security ensures when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security has three important and closely related components, which are availability of food, access to food, and absorption of food. Food security is thus, a multidimensional concept and extends beyond the production, availability and demand for food. Ensuring food security is the basic goal of social justice, apart from development of adequate human resources.

Components of Food Security:

1. Production and procurement.
2. Storage
3. Distribution.

All these functions are performed through the PDS (Public Distribution System). PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State governments. The Central government, through Food Corporation of India (FCI), has assumed the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of food grains to the State governments. The operational responsibility including allocation within State, identification of eligible families, issue of ration Cards and supervision of the functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) etc., rests with the State governments.

India accounts for 16.7 per cent of the world's food consumers. India's size in terms of food consumers is many times larger than the average size of the rest of the countries, except China. Improving food security ought to be an issue of great importance for a country like India where one-third of the population is estimated to be absolutely poor and one-half of children malnourished in one way or another. According to World Food Programme that rise of prices 87 per cent for food grains, 58 per cent for dairy products, and 46 per cent for rice created a crisis situation which threatens to plunge more than 100 million people on every continent into hunger is called 'silent tsunami'. A number of countries have been facing riots for food. According to CNN-IBN report in 2009, even farmers are the producers of food grains but are selling their wives into flesh trade to survive a few more days of living with that two-meal a day life. Hunger, and malnourishment that accompanies it prevents poor people from escaping poverty because it diminishes their ability to learn, work, and care for themselves and their family members.

Food insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food, and inadequate food utilization. However according to FAO, food insecurity exists when all people, at all times, do not have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and nutritious and preferences for an active and healthy life. In other words food insecurity has limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. Hunger is potential consequences of food security and, is defined as an uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food. The food insecurity is may occurs of two types, transitory and chronic. The transitory food insecurity may occur due to natural clematises and

anthropogenic factors such as flood, drought, earthquake, war, riots, erosion of income sources, price rise and so on. The chronic (hidden) food insecurity refers to a situation in which people consistently consume diets inadequate in calories generally by women, children (particularly scheduled tribes, and scheduled castes) in rural masses, and referred to as Chronic Energy Deficiency (CED). If an adult man takes caloric intake less than 1890 calories in a day for long time, he may be a victim of chronic food insecurity. Food insecurity is responsible for poor health. In the study conducted by Ayres and McCalla in 1996, have concluded in their study, that nearly 75 per cent of poor and undernourished people live in rural areas where food itself is produced.

History of Public Distribution System

PDS was introduced after 2nd World War due to severe food shortages in the country. Initially, the subsidy was common to all. In 1990's, PDS was restructured to include hilly and inaccessible areas. Finally, the scheme was moved with a targeted approach and is known as Targeted PDS (TPDS). Under Essential Commodities act 2001, Public distribution system order was passed. It governs rules regarding identification of beneficiaries and commodities to be included for PDS. Department of rural Development through BPL survey decides criteria for inclusion or exclusion of beneficiaries. Finally, individual states identify the beneficiary households. Central govt. allocates food grains as per list prepared by NITI Aayog (erstwhile Planning Commission) based on families of BPL category to each state. Enactment of Food security Act, 2013 has done away with the need for BPL based identification.

PDS in India Public Distribution System is considered as principal instrument in the hands of Government for providing safety net to the poor and the downtrodden. The system serves triple objectives namely protecting the poor, enhancing the nutritional status and generates a moderate influence on market prices. The focus and coverage of PDS have changed widely over the years. Initially during world war civilian consumption was restricted so as to divert food items to meet the food requirement of defence forces. Subsequently frequent occurrence of drought throughout the country made the planners to think on food shortages. In order to overcome this shortage ration system was came in to existence. FPS was opened to distribute the items of

mass consumption in urban areas. Thereafter, it was extended to rural areas. From the year 1992 Revamped PDS was introduced in those areas where Drought Prone Area Programme and Dessert Development Programme were in operation. Under this system people were allowed to purchase essential items from the FPS at relatively much lower subsidized rates. After, the Chief Ministers Conference held in July 1996, a revised scheme known as Targeted PDS was introduced countrywide with a network of 4.74 lakh FPS. Under this system two-tier subsidized pricing system by classifying the cardholders is followed. Cardholders are classified as Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL). The BPL families are entitled to receive the essential commodities at a price, which is very closer to the economic cost. BPL families are identified based on the methodology Page no.169 given by Lakdawala Exert Group on estimates of poverty. The TPDS was further liberalized in December 2000, and was renamed as Antyodaya Anna Scheme. Under this scheme the poor was further classified as the 'Poorest Among the Poor' and other living 'BPL'.

Categories of Public Distribution System in India

There have been monumental changes in the current Public Distribution System since its inception.

Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS)

The Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was launched in June, 1992 with a view to strengthen and streamline the PDS as well as to improve its reach in the far-flung, hilly, remote and inaccessible areas where a substantial section of the poor live. It covered 1775 blocks wherein area specific programs such as the Drought Prone Area 1 Paddy Procurement Centers (PPCs) operated by the PACS 2 Odisha State Co-operative Marketing Federation 3 National Agricultural Co-Operative Marketing Federation 5 Programme (DPAP), Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and certain Designated Hill Areas (DHA) identified in consultation with State Governments for special focus, with respect to improvement of the PDS infrastructure. Food grains for distribution in RPDS areas were issued to the States at 50 paise below the Central Issue Price. The scale of issue was up to 20 kg per card. The RPDS included area approach for ensuring effective reach of the PDS commodities, their delivery by State Governments at the doorstep of

FPSs in the identified areas, additional ration cards to the left out families, infrastructure requirements like additional Fair Price Shops, storage capacity etc. and additional commodities such as tea, salt, pulses, soap etc. for distribution through PDS outlets.

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)

In June 1997, the Government of India launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with focus on the poor. Under the TPDS, States are required to formulate and implement foolproof arrangements for identification of the poor for delivery of food grains and for its distribution in a transparent and accountable manner at the FPS level. The scheme, when introduced, was intended to benefit about 6 crore poor families for whom a quantity of about 72 lakh tons of food grains was earmarked annually. The allocation of food grains to the States/UTs was made on the basis of average consumption in the past i.e. average annual off-take of food grains under the PDS during the past ten years at the time of introduction of TPDS. The quantum of food grains in excess of the requirement of BPL families was provided to the State as 'transitory allocation' for which a quantum of 103 lakh tons of food grains was earmarked annually. Over and above the TPDS allocation, additional allocation to States was also given. The transitory allocation was intended for continuation of benefit of subsidized food grains to the population. Above the Poverty Line (APL) as any sudden withdrawal of benefits existing under PDS from them was not considered desirable. The 6 transitory allocation was issued at prices, which were subsidized but were higher than the prices for the BPL quota of food grains.

PDS for General BPL

The BPL survey of the government is based on certain indicators to assess the economic status of the households. In this context, the identified BPL family is issued a ration card by the department of food supplies and consumer welfare to avail the essential items on monthly basis. Besides, the government also creates space of different subsidized policy to the beneficiaries within the same scheme by looking into the matters of vulnerability on different aspects.

PDS for APL

The families found above the poverty line through the BPL survey are the APL families. When an APL family is issued a ration card by the department of foods supplies and consumer welfare, by that time the family becomes a beneficiary under the APL scheme. Usually, the subsidized prices for the essential items under the scheme are almost same with the prices of other schemes except the food grains prices.

Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)

AAY is a step in the direction of making TPDS aim at reducing hunger among the poorest segments of the BPL population. A National Sample Survey Exercise points towards the fact that about 5 % of the total population in the country sleeps without two square meals a day. This section of the population can be called as “hungry”. In order to make TPDS more focused and targeted towards this category of population, the “Antyodaya Anna Yojana” (AAY) was launched in December, 2000 for one crore poorest of the poor families. AAY has been expanded multiple times thus increasing its overage to 2.5 crore households. AAY contemplates providing poorest of the poor families food grains at a highly subsidized rate of Rs.2/per kg for wheat and Rs. 3/per kg for rice. The States/UTs are required to bear the distribution cost, including margin to dealers and retailers as well as the transportation cost. Thus, the entire food subsidy is being passed on to the consumers under the scheme.

Annapurna Yojana

The beneficiary under the scheme is not a family rather an individual. An individual being a helpless, destitute, widow, divorced or same tune of plight is considered a beneficiary under the scheme and gets free of food grains of a certain quantity.

Goals of PDS

The goal of PDS does not restrict itself with the distribution of rationed articles. Making available adequate quantities of essential articles at all times, in places accessible to all, at prices affordable to all and protection of the weaker section of the population from the vicious spiral of rising prices is the broad spectrum of PDS.

The goals of PDS are:

- Make goods available to consumers, especially the disadvantaged / vulnerable sections.
- Check and prevent hoarding and black marketing in essential commodities.
- Rectify the existing imbalances between the supply and demand for consumer goods. Ensure social justice in distribution of basic necessities of life.
- Even out fluctuations in prices and availability of mass consumption goods.
- Support poverty-alleviation programmes, particularly, rural employment programmes, (SGRY/SGSY/IRDP/ Mid day Meal Scheme).

PDS under Five Year Plans

The real aim of First-Five year plan was essentially guided by the consideration of price stability for consumers in the urban areas.

This trend continued in the Second- Five year plan which emphasized on building food reserve to moderate prices fluctuations and to meet emergencies.

The Third-Five year plan recognized some of the factors inhibiting the implementation of the food policy specially storage and warehousing facilities etc.

The Fourth-Five year plan continued the trend and further got caught up in ideology of cooperatives replacing Fair Price Shops (FPS) instead of emphasizing the need for making food grains available to all the poor at affordable prices.

The Fifth-Five year plan used PDS as an instrument to discourage speculative activities in the area of trading and minimizing any sizeable subsidy burden on the

public exchequer. On July 1, 1979 the Union Government inaugurated the production-cum-distribution system.

The Sixth-Five year plan (1980-85) made a general reference to the need for the PDS to play a major role in ensuring supplies of essential commodities to consumers at reasonable prices. It promised that the PDS would be so developed that it would remain a stable and permanent feature of the strategy to control prices and to achieve equitable distribution.

The Seventh-Five year plan recognized the PDS as a permanent feature of the strategy to control prices, reduce fluctuations and achieve an equitable distribution of goods (Planning Commission, 1985).

The Eighth-Five year plan focused to make PDS more efficient by proper targeting and exclusion of non-poor segments of the population (Planning Commission, 1992).

The Ninth-Five year plan (1997-2000) aimed at achieving various objectives such as maintaining supplies in PDS, monitoring the prices of commodities of common consumption, enforcing various control orders under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and strengthening the consumer movement in the country.

The Tenth-Five year plan (2002-07) emphasized on introducing two-tier price scheme under public distribution system which will weed out bogus cards in circulation. The objective therefore, should be to reduce the subsidy burden of the Government without affecting the interests of the poor and downtrodden. It aimed at strengthening of price monitoring cell for supervision, scrutiny and reporting of the prices & trend analysis of price situation; monitoring cell for public distribution system for close monitoring of the functioning of the public distribution system & prevention of malpractices; analytical laboratory for improving quality control measures & analysis of food articles and assistance to voluntary consumer organization for consumer education and protection. Since then, the Indian government has been using the public distribution system as a deliberate policy instrument to overcome chronic food shortages apart from using it for stabilizing food prices and consumption in view of fluctuating food production in the country.

PDS Management

Management structure of the PDS in India includes policy formulation, fixing of objectives, strategy for procurement and distribution of foodgrains and other essential commodities. The operational details of PDS differ from state to state. Though the policy of setting up Fair Price Shops owes its initiation to national food policy, its implementation remains the direct responsibility of the State Governments. The centre plays a prominent role in procurement, interstate movement of cereals and in determining the support prices which is the basic factor influencing the PDS issue price in the state. In order to operate the PDS effectively, the central government also issue from time to time guidelines to the states, regarding the operational details of the PDS. Of course, the central guidelines have been taken into account, but the decisions have been those of the state government. These include the commodities to be brought under PDS, ration scales, number, location and licensing of FPS, the terms and conditions for the FPS authorisation and methods of supplying, checking, remunerating FPS dealers etc. Setting up of an effective delivery system, granting fair and equitable access at a low administrative cost and in accordance with the needs of the local population at various places depends upon a large number of administrative and organisational details and many subsidiary policy decisions. Apart from the decisions taken at the state level, these decisions also taken at the district, block, at FPS level and play their part in determining the availability cost and benefits of access to the PDS.

National Food Security Act (NFSA)

National Food Security Act, 2013

As passed by the Parliament, Government has notified the National Food Security Act, 2013 on 10th September, 2013 with the objective to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.

The Act provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving subsidized food grains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), thus covering about two-thirds of the population. The eligible persons will be entitled to receive 5 Kgs of food grains per person per month at subsidized prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains. The existing Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households, which constitute the poorest of the poor, will continue to receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.

The Act also has a special focus on the nutritional support to women and children. Besides meal to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after the child birth, such women will also be entitled to receive maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000. Children upto 14 years of age will be entitled to nutritious meals as per the prescribed nutritional standards. In case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals, the beneficiaries will receive food security allowance. The Act also contains provisions for setting up of grievance redressal mechanism at the District and State levels. Separate provisions have also been made in the Act for ensuring transparency and accountability.

Salient features of the National Food Security Act, 2013

- Coverage and entitlement under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) : Upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population will be covered under TPDS, with uniform entitlement of 5 kg per person per month. However, since Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households constitute poorest of the poor, and are presently entitled to 35 kg per household per month, entitlement of existing AAY households will be protected at 35 kg per household per month.

- State-wise coverage : Corresponding to the all India coverage of 75% and 50% in the rural and urban areas, State-wise coverage will be determined by the Central Government. Planning Commission has determined the State-wise coverage by using the NSS Household Consumption Survey data for 2011-12 and also provided the State-wise "inclusion ratios".
- Subsidised prices under TPDS and their revision : Foodgrains under TPDS will be made available at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains for a period of three years from the date of commencement of the Act. Thereafter prices will be suitably linked to Minimum Support Price (MSP). In case, any State's allocation under the Act is lower than their current allocation, it will be protected upto the level of average offtake during last three years, at prices to be determined by the Central Government. Existing prices for APL households i.e. Rs. 6.10 per kg for wheat and Rs 8.30 per kg for rice has been determined as issue prices for the additional allocation to protect the average offtake during last three years.
- Identification of Households : Within the coverage under TPDS determined for each State, the work of identification of eligible households is to be done by States/UTs.
- Nutritional Support to women and children : Pregnant women and lactating mothers and children in the age group of 6 months to 14 years will be entitled to meals as per prescribed nutritional norms under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) schemes. Higher nutritional norms have been prescribed for malnourished children upto 6 years of age.
- Maternity Benefit : Pregnant women and lactating mothers will also be entitled to receive maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000.
- 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.
- Grievance Redressal Mechanism : Grievance redressal mechanism at the District and State levels. States will have the flexibility to use the existing machinery or set up separate mechanism.
- Cost of intra-State transportation & handling of foodgrains and FPS Dealers' margin : Central Government will provide assistance to States in meeting the expenditure incurred by them on transportation of foodgrains within the State, its handling and FPS dealers' margin as per norms to be devised for this purpose.

- Transparency and Accountability : Provisions have been made for disclosure of records relating to PDS, social audits and setting up of Vigilance Committees in order to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Food Security Allowance : Provision for food security allowance to entitled beneficiaries in case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals.
- Penalty : Provision for penalty on public servant or authority, to be imposed by the State Food Commission, in case of failure to comply with the relief recommended by the District Grievance Redressal Officer.

COVID 19 Pandemic

COVID-19 is not only a global pandemic and public health crisis; it has also severely affected the global economy and financial markets. Significant reductions in income, a rise in unemployment, and disruptions in the transportation, service, and manufacturing industries are among the consequences of the disease mitigation measures that have been implemented in many countries. It has become clear that most governments in the world underestimated the risks of rapid COVID-19 spread and were mostly reactive in their crisis response. As disease outbreaks are not likely to disappear in the near future, proactive international actions are required to not only save lives but also protect economic prosperity.

Covid-19 and the Economy

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic, pointing to over 3 million cases and 207,973 deaths in 213 countries and territories. The infection has not only become a public health crisis but has also affected the global economy. Significant economic impact has already occurred across the globe due to reduced productivity, loss of life, business closures, trade disruption, and decimation of the tourism industry. COVID-19 may be that a “wake-up” call for global leaders to intensify cooperation on epidemic preparedness and provide the necessary financing for international collective action. There has been ample information on the expected economic and health costs of infectious disease outbreaks but the world has failed to adequately invest in preventive and preparedness measures to mitigate the risks of large epidemics.

With globalization, urbanization, and environmental change, infectious disease outbreaks and epidemics have become global threats requiring a collective response. Although the majority of developed countries, predominantly European and North American, have strong real-time surveillance and health systems to manage infectious disease spread, improvements in public health capacity in low-income and high-risk countries—including human and animal surveillance, workforce preparedness, and strengthening laboratory resources—need to be supported by using national resources supplemented with international donor funding. International collective action among governments, non-government organizations, and private companies has been advocated in building and financing technological platforms to accelerate the research on and development response to new pathogens with epidemic potential .

In the case of COVID-19, such cooperation is critical, especially for the development and production of a vaccine. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a global partnership launched in 2017, has tracked global efforts in COVID-19 vaccine development activity and is advocating for strong international cooperation to ensure that vaccine, when developed, will be manufactured in sufficient quantities and that equitable access will be provided to all nations regardless of ability to pay. Furthermore, affected countries may benefit from exchanging technological innovations in contact tracing, such as health Quick Response (QR) codes, to manage the outbreak more effectively. However, there are important privacy implications that need to be considered. In the case of COVID-19, the collective response and adoption of preventive measures to stop the global spread were implemented too late, after COVID-19 had already penetrated other regions through international travel.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed India's health infrastructure and disrupted the economy. Additionally, recent data on malnutrition paints a worrying picture. India has one of the highest proportions of undernourished children in the world, in terms of both stunting and wasting. Moreover, the National Family Health Survey 2015-16 and 2019-20 rounds show that there is either a stagnation or worsening of several malnutrition indicators in several states. (The NFHS-5 data pertain to the situation before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Studies have shown that households continued consuming less food several months after the nationwide lockdown in 2020, than before it. A survey by the Centre for

Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University found that over 75 per cent of the households were eating less during the lockdown than before it. There was a slight recovery post-lockdown, but 60 per cent of the households still reported eating less than before the lockdown. Moreover, disadvantaged households have been disproportionately affected. For example, almost half of the informal workers in a survey said that they were eating less than before.

In this context, PDS can be all the more important to help vulnerable families tide over the pandemic-induced food insecurity.

PRADHAN MANTRI GARIB KALYAN YOJANA

In 2016, the Govt. of India launched Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana as a part of the Taxation Laws Act 2016 (second amendment). The initial objective of the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana scheme was to ensure tax evaders declare unaccounted money and avoid penalty and criminal prosecution. Through this scheme, the govt. intended to use the deposited black money for welfare of the poor people. The scheme was valid from December 2016 to March 2017.

In 2020, the govt. extended the scheme to include relief packages during the pandemic. The aim was to support livelihood of poor during COVID-related lockdowns.

PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana

This is the worlds' largest food security scheme launched by the Government of India to combat COVID-induced economic disruptions. The scheme aims to ensure food safety (of the poor) by providing food items including 5 kg rice/wheat per individual and 1 kg gram per family every month for free.

All beneficiaries of the targeted public distribution system (TPDS) for Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and priority household (PHH) ration cardholders are eligible for food grains under this scheme.

Key features of the scheme include the following:

- 66% of India's population was covered under this scheme
- Each one of them received double of their current entitlement.
- This additional was free of cost.
- To ensure availability of protein, 1 kg of pulses were provided to families (as per regional preferences)
- As the pandemic spread through the country, the Government of India announced the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, providing 5 kgs of rice or wheat and 1 kg of pulses to eligible people free-of-cost, in addition to the regular entitlement of quota of foodgrains. The scheme was initially meant to be implemented from April 2020 to June 2020 but was later extended till November 2020. In April 2021, as the second wave of infections spread, the Government of India again announced 5 kgs of free foodgrains per person per month for the months of May and June. This was further extended till November 2021.

But, as systemic issues such as the significant exclusion errors of eligible beneficiaries persist, vulnerable families are likely to struggle to cope with the economic effects of the pandemic.

KERALA

Kerala is one of the smallest states of India. The state stretches along the Malabar coast on the western side of the Indian peninsula, is sandwiched between the hills of the Western Ghats on its eastern edge, the Arabian sea on the western edge and is bordered by the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN KERALA

The **Civil Supplies Department** discharges the important responsibilities of Public Distribution, enforcement of markets discipline and promotion of consumer awareness and protection of their interest. In the 60s and 70s it won many accolades for the pioneering achievements in the implementation of Universal Rationing System. The Department of Civil Supplies functions under the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs of the Government of Kerala. The Commissioner of Civil Supplies is the Principal Head of the Department and Principal Advisor to the Minister in charge of Food & Civil Supplies. The Director of Civil Supplies is the administrative head of the Department of Civil Supplies. He exercises the statutory functions entrusted with him under the Kerala Rationing Order 1966, PDS (Control) Order, 2001 and other control orders issued by the Government of Kerala under the Essential Commodities Act.

The Civil Supplies Department discharges the important responsibilities of Public Distribution enforcement of markets discipline and promotion of consumer awareness and protection of their interests. The Public Distribution System came into existence in the state with effect from 01/07/1965. The state which has very high deficit in the production of food grains, the PDS has great relevance and importance. Keeping in view the importance and need of promotion of consumer awareness and protection of human rights, Government have formed a separate wing in the food, Civil supplies and Consumer Affairs Department in the secretariat to attend the subject, Consumer Affairs. Similarly a Consumer Affairs Cell has been formed in the Commissionerate of Civil Supplies also.

The functions carried out by the Department can be broadly divided into the following three categories.

1) Control of Rationing and marketing of essential commodities

In the state, which was very high deficit in the production of food grains, the PDS has great relevance and importance. Timely lifting of commodities allocated from central pool and ensuring distribution of the same through more than 14000 ration shops and ensuring timely lifting and distribution of the same is a major function of the Department. The Department keeps vigil to discourage and prevent hoardings and black marketing of essential commodities.

2) Consumer Affairs

Keeping in view the importance and need for promotion of consumer awareness and protection of their rights, Government of Kerala formed a separate wing in the Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department in the secretariate to attend to the subject, Consumer Affairs. This wing works under the Additional Secretary to Government with supporting staff. Accordingly a Consumer Affairs Cell has been formed in the Commissionerate of Civil Supplies also.

3) Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (CDRC) and Fora (CDRFs)

As per the Consumer Protection Act 1986, Government of Kerala set up the State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission and the Consumer Dispute Redressal Fora at three regional places. On 03/10/1991, separate fora were established for all the 14 districts. Now the State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission, which is the state level apex body and 14 district fora were functioning in full fledged manner.

4) Distribution of Kerosene

Distribution of kerosene is governed by the Kerala Kerosene Control Order, 1968 promulgated by the State Government under the essential Commodities act, 1955. As per this order, sufficient number of Kerosene Wholesale Dealers (KWDs) are appointed by the District Collector concerned and these KWDs lift the stock of kerosene allotted to them every month by the Departmental Officers from respective companies, IOC, BPC, IBP and HPC and make it available for distribution to the

ARDs who in turn lift the stock allotted to them and distributed to the card holders. The scale of distribution is 0.5 liters per month for electrified houses and 4 liters per month for non- electrified houses for lighting purposes. 2532 kl Kerosene is issued as for fishing purposes minimum deposit of Rs 2500 at their order.

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 and Antyodaya Anna Yojana beneficiaries	35 kg food grains per month free of cost, 1 kg sugar at the rate of Rs.21 and 500 mil liter kerosene at the rate Rs.33 per liter.
Pink card	Priority or Below Poverty Line (BPL)	4 kg rice, 1 kg wheat per head per month at the rate of Rs.2/kg, 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.

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic hit the Public Distribution System in Kerala provided Special kit to all ration card holders which was actually a relief to everyone.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter mainly consist of the secondary data collected in order to understand the role, relevance and effectiveness of Public Distribution System in India as well as Kerala in specific.

Bhat and Bhat (2012) conducted a study on the functioning of the Public Distribution System in Kashmir. It is referred to as the 'Kashmir Model' of Food Security Programme which was implemented, where in grains are obtained from the framers at higher price than the market price and provide them in a subsidized rate to the consumers. After accomplishing self- sufficiency in food production, the main challenge of the PDS was translating this macro level food security programme into a micro level, so that households in states which couldn't produce enough food to feed its population and depended on imports could avail of the surplus in states which produced more than what was necessary to feed their population. In their study they have concluded that, the PDS in Kashmir region is not functioning properly as per the expectation of the general public and also mentioned about the lack of vigilance from the side of the State Government on the PDS outlet owners which is resulting in to black marketing and mal practices.

Arora (2013) examined the functioning of food subsidies in India and analyzes the reasons behind the failure of the Public Distribution System in many parts of the country. She argues that the two major objectives for initiating this food security program were to provide nutritional support to the poor through subsidized and cheap food grains and maintain price stability. It has failed to reach the poor in most of the states other than the southern states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, where it has been partially successful. To improve the functioning of the system it is imperative to improve outreach and proper vigilance to be provided to reach to the inner areas of the North eastern states of the country.

In his study, Ghuman (2013) focuses on the organisation and operation of the Punjab Public Distribution System (PDS). They promoted the Public Distribution System as a helpful policy tool for supplying essential items to individuals living in poverty. Punjab contributes significantly to national wheat and rice output. According to their research, over 76 percent of food grains in Punjab were diverted to the open market, with another 13 percent going to APL families. Only 10% of the grains were delivered to the BPL recipients. Their research also detailed the fundamental flaws and flaws in the PDS's operation in Punjab.

Bora (1992) described the growth of Maharashtra's food administration. For food regulation and administration, the Bombay model was followed throughout India. Even in the most dire food crises, the British government pursued a laissez-faire pricing strategy. Until World War II, the distribution of available food grains and other important goods was entrusted to market forces, even in times of scarcity. This sparked a culture of stockpiling, profiteering, and speculating, much to the detriment of farmers and consumers, while the government was also exporting food grains at the same time. Rationing should be started immediately, according to the 1943 food grains policy. Ration stores have been established in Pune, Ahamdabad, Solapur, and Hubli, based on the Bombay model.

In Maharashtra, India, Sawant (2013) evaluated the impact of PDS on social security and poverty alleviation. They discovered that PDS was not reaching the poor and needy, therefore it was modified to Targeted PDS with the goal of ensuring food security for the most vulnerable members of society. They agree that the current state of PDS, such as low quality of good supply, weight reduction, leakages of PDS items to the open market, non-availability of commodities, and so on, has contributed to the scheme's collapse. They propose a timely supply of high-quality items, the development of accessible public facilities, the consolidation of families into a single fair-price shop, and an effective and systematic complaint-redressing process for the poor.

Kumar (2012) stated in his study that corruption at both the micro and macro levels has caused the Public Distribution System to collapse. "Consumer Clubs," a Government of India initiative launched in 2006-07 with the goal of educating youngsters about consumer rights and protecting and disseminating information about the government's different schemes. Several clubs in rural, elementary, and upper primary schools have served as watchdogs to ensure that the PDS system is functioning properly in their areas. The clubs were discovered to serve a vital role in preventing corruption and maintaining food security, but they were made non-functional owing to a lack of financial assistance.

In 32 communities, Srinivas and Thaha (2004) discussed the Alternative Public Distribution System (APDS) using the Community Grain Fund. Local Production, Local Storage, and Local Distribution are the goals of the APDS program. The gains this effort produced on food and nutrition security, fodder and fuelwood security, livelihood, and ecological security were astounding in a rain-fed semi-arid location like Zaheerabad in Andhra Pradesh's Medak district. But, more than any of these already outstanding indications, the fact that each of the 32 rural communities was governed and administered by Dalit women was a tremendous political statement made by the women of DDS sanghams.

George (1996) investigated the Indian food subsidy. According to their research, the food subsidy has two components: one for the consumer and the other for the expense of carrying buffer stock. The Food Corporation of India is responsible for procuring and issuing food grains on behalf of the Indian government (FCI). The difference between these two prices is frequently insufficient to cover the Corporation's handling costs, thus the government reimburses the FCI for the difference between the economic cost and the issue price as a consumer subsidy.

George (1999) looked at the PDS in Kerala, where it was used by 97 percent of the population. The study looked into Kerala's previous agriculture output, food availability, procurement and distribution performance, and the factors that influenced it in order to better understand the food grain system. The state shared just a minor percentage of food grain output. Because of the substantial price differential between the free market and the ration price, the quality of food grains offered through ration stores is limited. Rice was purchased in significant quantities by low-income populations. Consumer costs were significantly greater than producer expenses in the absence of restrictions. Kerala was unable to fund its own PDS due to the economic viability of its fair pricing stores.

Food subsidies, according to Grover (1998), are a formidable weapon in the government's arsenal for controlling the economy. The government's subsidy has been gradually raised over time. However, the PDS Working Group of the Eighth Plan suggested a significant cut in food grain subsidies. The Dalgi Committee (1979) also stressed the importance of social aims being subsidised. Grover's research focused on the micro level, namely the state of Haryana, Hissar, and Karnal districts. Both ration stores and cardholders were included in the PDS research. PDS's effect on the weaker sections has been noted.

Puri (2012) conducted a study of 12 randomly chosen villages in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh and discovered that the vast majority of PDS recipients are content with the way their ration stores operate and are adamantly opposed to cash transfers. Due to the lack of banks in rural India, he discovered that currency transmission was a serious challenge. The majority of respondents said that dal and cooking oil should be included in the list of products offered, in addition to the commodities in the PDS. They also advised for reducing the amount of wheat served and substituting rice in its place. It was also proposed that food grains be allocated according to the number of persons rather than the entire family.

With reference to the state of Andhra Pradesh, Tarozzi (2002) examined the Indian Public Distribution System as a provider of food security. According to him, Andhra Pradesh already had a focused and somewhat major distribution system in place before the implementation of the Targeted Public Distribution System. Andhra Pradesh began implementing the "2 Rupees per Kilogram" scheme in 1983. The recipients were given a special ration card, and their eligibility was determined by a means test.

Singh (2011) has been pointed out some of the drawbacks in the PDS-

- Lack of effective contribution towards household food security,
- Urban biased and pro-rich to its ineffectiveness in reaching the poor,
- PDS is not cost effective,
- Storage losses are very high, and
- Per capita transfer of income is very small in amount.

George (2006) focuses on a major issue proper nutrition in India. The author claims that, despite the fact that agriculture is India's primary business, the right to food bill is still languishing in the Indian parliament. In India, due to effective politicians, the right to education takes precedence, but for some reason, they have yet to provide the right to food.

In a research conducted in Maharashtra by Chandanshiv (2013), it was discovered that problems like as leakage and benefits given to the non-poor are caused by the removal of qualified recipients from the PDS list. They also stated that PDS may be rendered universal if it incorporates additional commodities like millets, grains, pulses and edible oils. They also defended the idea that PDS alone cannot meet people's food needs and argued that the poor should have access to all of the advantages of programmes like PDS. They also listed concerns arising from cash transfers, such as unfair exclusion, unjustifiable inclusion, administrative loss, and probable leakages, as examples. They suggested that currency might be used to purchase non-food items such as whiskey, undermining the basic base.

Jha (2013) investigated the weaknesses in the Public Distribution System and discussed the different ramifications of the National Food Security Act of 2011, with a particular focus on challenges of finance for guaranteeing universal food security. It has been suggested that a 'common issue price' may be a solution to limit commodity leakages and misappropriation; however, given the scale of food instability and hunger in India, food subsidies and universal grain distribution are insufficient for the population. They pushed for a system that is free of corruption, efficient, and responsible, with improved infrastructure, structural changes, the addition of additional outlets, service monitoring, and decentralisation of distribution and grievance resolution systems.

Jha also did a comparison analysis of the Public Distribution System in 2013 based on characteristics such as food subsidies, income transfers, and low participation.

Primary data was acquired from 500 homes in each of three Indian states: Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. According to the report, the programme is not adequately targeted, and both the poor and the non-poor benefit from the subsidies. A better network of Fair Price Shops, a bigger PDS price margin compared to the market price, appropriate supply, effective procurement, storage, and distribution, and a focus on livelihood growth prospects in rural regions may all help to assure food security.

Svedberg (2012) weighed in on the benefits and drawbacks of replacing the present PDS with a targeted and differentiated cash distribution plan. He said that such a system may help more than two-thirds of households and expand the PDS' reach into more impoverished areas. He raised worry that supplying poor households with unconditional cash will diminish labour supply while considerably increasing nutritious consumption. He also stated that an increase in the poor's income would result in inflation. To combat the usage of ghost cards, he proposed a targeted and differentiated all-India cash transfer programme based on biometric UID cards.

Based on data from the 50th wave of the National Sample Survey, Household Consumption Survey, Dutta and his colleagues. (2011) analysed the public distribution of food in two states, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The article concludes that there is a problem with commodity utilisation, population targeting, income transfer magnitude, and food subsidy cost effectiveness. In Andhra Pradesh, a substantially bigger number of individuals use PDS than in Maharashtra, and coverage is 30 percent higher. In order to enhance the system, it is necessary to research success stories and adopt best practises based on regional inequalities.

Khera (2011) examined the efficacy of India's public distribution system as a food security intervention, as well as the hurdles to its usage and effects on service consumers. She discovered that usage is quite poor, and wheat is frequently acquired on the open market at a higher price rather than using the commodities given by the 17 PDS. Her finding proposes two ideas, one based on supply and the other on demand. In the first case, the purchase is motivated by demand factors such as high transaction prices, easy availability of coarse grains, and so on. Supply-driven quantity restrictions, as well as income levels, might be the second factor. She attempts to prove that BPL households purchase PDS.

Khera (2011) also discovered that respondents got between 84 and 88 percent of their entire monthly allowance. She further argued that the PDS food grain subsidy alone is about equivalent to a week's NREGA salary every month for those living below the poverty line. Except in Bihar, where the PDS is still in bad health, a huge majority of respondents chose in-kind food transfers to cash transfers, according to her research. From a universal PDS in Tamil Nadu that delivers grains, dals, and edible oil with little leakages to a targeted PDS in Bihar where much of the grain does not even reach the rural poor, each surveyed PDS has its own distinct peculiarities.

By comparing numbers from the 61st round of the NSSO, Khara (2011) approximated the proportion of grain diverted from the Public Distribution System to the free market. She divided Indian states into three groups based on monthly per capita grain purchases and diversion: "functioning," "reviving," and "languishing." In the first category, there are seven states with a proven track record of PDS operation. There are five revival stages that have proved to boost PDS function dramatically. Eight states are included in the last group, where PDS is not doing properly. In her study, she focuses on potential methods for improving reviving states. Her study provides compelling evidence that PDS is non-functional in many areas.

Using data from the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Khosla (2011) tried to quantify the impact of caste reservation regulations on the provision of public goods and services in gramme Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh (NREGS). His results revealed that the operation of Panchayati Raj institutions is very context-dependent and is influenced by a variety of socio-political variables. This article indicates that despite not having a stake in NREGS, the advanced caste remained a significant role in power-based politics. He believes that his research will be valuable in a number of parallel areas of Panchayati Raj institutions, where scholars will strive to understand how caste-based reservations interact with politics, bureaucracy, and gender reservations.

Ray et al. (2011) looked at India's food security issues during the previous few decades and how the PDS works with various macro policies. Their research also aims to identify the demographic segments that are entitled to food security in general. They also examine the availability, storage, and purchase of food grains, as well as the performance of the PDS, identify system flaws, and devise solutions to eliminate anomalies and improve the distribution mechanism. They said that focusing on people as part of the PDS has failed to tackle the hunger problem. The failure of the goal of providing food security to the poor has been caused by the exclusion of actual recipients.

Khera (2008) looked at the Government of India's 1997 criteria for identifying low-income families. She discovered that the criteria are consistent and unchanging across the country. She gathered data from 400 randomly selected homes in eight Rajasthan villages and discovered that one-third of the BPL recipients were incorrectly included, while 44% of the eligible households were left out. She questioned the practise of using similar standards across the country while ignoring the variance of geographic and socioeconomic characteristics. She rationalised the omission of eligible homes from the BPL list by claiming that the State Government is attempting to meet the poverty objectives established by the Census Bureau. She also argues that there is a link between the two.

Tritah (2003) looked at the impact of food subsidies on food security and poverty. PDS was discovered to have a poor track record of reaching the intended audience. There is also conditional access to the PDS, with just a small portion of the population benefiting from it. Food subsidies leak out of the system and aren't used to their full potential. The study proposes a new poverty measure that would incorporate the food content of poverty lines and demonstrate that, in comparison to this poverty line, PDS has benefited the targeted group.

Ramaswamy and colleagues. (2002) investigated state institutions' inefficiencies in controlling food prices and administering the public distribution system, which had repercussions for product quality, supply chain, and recipient status. The research presents methodologies for evaluating demand shifts from PDS to open market based on commodity quality. Demand shifts will not occur as long as the market price of food grains stays greater than the price of subsidised grains, according to the findings of the study. When the open market price is comparable to the price of subsidised goods, the quality of the product becomes the deciding factor. In order to optimise procurement, the state must coordinate both the price and the quality of the grains.

Mooij (2001) investigated why the Public Distribution System in undivided Bihar failed (Now Bihar and Jharkhand). Political participation in financial misallocation, licence distribution, and card distribution resulted in a system of widespread anarchy and entrenched corruption, the origins of which are difficult to address. The open involvement of the mafia, rangdars, and the willful blindness of officials is a key factor in the disempowerment of impoverished and marginalised families who are entitled to services. It demands that the state's political and socioeconomic conditions be urgently improved in order to ensure that the benefits reach the intended populace.

The historical and political evolution of PDS in India was studied by Mooij (1998). The article discusses the early public distribution programme, which began in 1939, and the many phases it went through until the 1991 implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). Following WWII, the British government in India implemented food grain rationing in Bombay and then in other cities. The second Food Grain Policy Committee (1947), formed after independence, attempted to modernise the system. Since 1957, the Food Grain Enquiry Committee has aided the growth of PDS by importing low-cost wheat from the United States, lowering commodity prices. The 1964 Food Grain Prices Committee advocated establishing the Food Corporation of India which still continues to function.

Balakrishnan et al. (1997) studied the effect of the quality of products provided under public distribution system on consumer switches between open market and PDS. The increase in the issue price increases the cost of PDS grain and forces the customers to switch to the open market however the effect is not always direct. Open market was found to be principle source of supply and PDS did not cover most of the households and failed to satisfy the demand. They suggested increasing the coverage of PDS to maximum households as well as improving the quality of the products so as to compete with the open market as this would help in providing food security for all.

Ahluwalia (1993) evaluated the Indian Public Distribution System's coverage and performance. His main concerns are that leakages into the free market are eating into the scheme's profits, that the program's main target, the vulnerable sections of society, is frequently left out, and that there is a disparity in rural versus urban outreach, all of which have contributed to the scheme's failure. He suggests that in the future, when determining central food grain allocation, the scheme should pay more attention to state poverty levels. The laws and procedures governing ration card procurement and use should be made more user-friendly. Rather than employing a larger number of low-quality grains, a few key locally produced grains should be included so as to reduce costs, satisfy needs and improve the general well being of the targeted population

In Kerala, Koshy (1991) studied stock diversion at sale locations. They said that even in a high-performing state like Kerala, grain has been diverted to the open market in large quantities. They propose that Fair Price store owners raise as much as the beneficiaries desire at a certain selling point. There should be improved means for beneficiaries to receive their monthly allotment without running out of supplies. They suggested that focusing the PDS on the poorest people will have better social and economic impact. It has been expected that enhancing the fair pricing shop's economic sustainability will lessen the need for malpractices.

One of the primary concerns to be addressed, according to Prahadeeswaran M. & colleagues. (2005), is the low offtake of commodities, as compared to the high cost of production and procurement. Despite a decrease in the area under food grain crops in India, yearly output increase for the two main staple grains was 3.59 percent in the 1980s and 2.28 percent in the 1990s, which was higher than the population growth rate of 1.9 percent (Economic Survey, 2003). The overall allotment of rice and wheat in 2008-09 was 26.26 lakh tonnes, although the recorded offtake was just 20.19 lakh tonnes (Department of Food and Public Distribution, Annual Report 2008- 09).

Cyriac and his colleague (2008) both the researcher had studied PDS system in Kerala. They come to the conclusion that, today the PDS in Kerala is redundant for the majority of the population, and since the subsidies come at such an enormous cost, it is definitely the need of the hour to reform and restructure the system. They are also suggesting some reforms to the PDS. That is there is a need to explore the possibility of introducing innovative ideas such as smart cards, food credit/debit cards, food stamps and decentralized procurement in order to eliminate hunger and make food available to the poor wherever they may be in a cost-effective manner.

Shunmughan and Sengottuvel (2010) find that rural people are the primary stakeholders in the Public Distribution System (PDS). India is the world's second most populous country, with the majority of its citizens living in rural regions. PDS was created as a vital component of the Indian government's economic policy to ensure that food grains are available to the public at reasonable costs and to improve food security for the poor. Establishing effective consumer groups in PDS may aid in the protection of the rural population from exploitation and, as a result, may aid in rural development.

A comparative study of India and China was conducted by Zhou and Gandhi (2005). According to their research, India and China both have a public food distribution system that provides subsidised food to its citizens, but the coverage is different. In China, the system favoured urban residents, but in India, everyone had access to government-subsidized food. However, the lack of targeting in their PDS subsidises individuals who are not poor unnecessarily, leading to the rising food subsidy. Though change has been sluggish and incremental, India has begun to pay greater attention to the poor's interests, and the PDS has become a significant instrument of the government's economic policy for improving food security for the poor.

Lang (2012) cited certain government measures aimed at modernising and computerising the PDS. There has been an effort to eliminate identifying mistakes and leakages from the PDS. The digitization of customer records and the computerization of delivery systems are at the forefront of these initiatives. With the use of information and communication technology, the Department of Food and Public Distribution has started a TPDS computerization initiative to make the system more transparent, efficient, effective, and responsible.

Ruth (2011) gave a talk about food security and India's Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). In his study, he stated that current yearly food supply is sufficient to feed the world's 6.9 billion people. However, even in the twenty-first century, access to and distribution of food such that people do not have to die of hunger remains elusive, making food security one of the primary worldwide concerns. Food is provided in emergencies by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and other United Nations organisations; the World Food Convention (WFC); and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology used by the researcher to study the role played by Public Distribution System during Covid-19 Pandemic with special reference to Rural area. This includes the research design and tools used for data collection.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

PDS in India Public Distribution System is considered as a principal instrument in the hands of government for providing safety net to the poor and the downtrodden. The system serves triple objectives namely protecting the poor, enhancing the nutritional status and generates a moderate influence on market prices. The focus and coverage of PDS have changed widely over the years. The Public Distribution System has evolved over time as its importance has also changed. In Kerala, ration cards are widely acknowledged as identity cards and are merely kept and renewed as a means of identification.

But, during the Pandemic period these PDS outlets played a vital role in eradicating poverty in rural area. Most of the population in the rural area are self employed or daily waged workers for whom these benefits and subsidies from the PDS outlet are a big relief. However, the poor lifting of food grains stock by state food corporation against the allocation acts by the Central Government as an important constraint in the successful implementation of PDS . It has been observed that on account of shortage of resources, there is considerably delay in lifting of food grains on the part of state agencies and fair price shops dealers. The consumers are not given the arrears of the previous month which in turn makes room for diversion and defeating the very purpose of the scheme.

This study explores these issues in depth and attempts to identify the prevalent food consumption patterns across socio-demographic groups in the rural area of Kerala while linking them to questions of food security, malnutrition and the economic status of different categories of households.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

To study about the Public Distribution System(PDS) during Covid-19 Pandemic.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:

1. To study the benefits derived out of Public Distribution System during Covid-19 Pandemic
2. To study the problems relating to the implementations of the Public Distribution System
3. To find out whether the beneficiaries have any suggestions to the improvement of the Public Distribution System.

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS:

- Public Distribution System :

The Public Distribution System came into existence in the state with effect from 01/07/1965. The state which has very high deficit in the production of food grains, the PDS has great relevance and importance. The Public Distribution System studied are from Cherai area of Ernakulam District of Kerala.

- Covid-19 Pandemic :

Covid-19 has affected day to day life and is slowing down the global economy. This pandemic has affected thousands of peoples. It has rapidly affected our day to day life, businesses, disrupted the world trade and movements. In this project Covid 19 an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 Virus is been analyzed from the point of Public Distribution System and its role played during this pandemic in rural area.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The research design used in this study is descriptive in nature. A descriptive research design is a type of research design which is widely used to obtain information which systematically explain the phenomenon or population. The descriptive research design helps to understand the different factors that lead to the understanding of the importance of ration shops especially during the covid-19 pandemic which generated a hope for living in the minds of individuals.

VARIABLES:**Dependent Variable:**

Public Distribution System

Independent Variable:

Age

Sex

Educational Level

Marital Status

Occupation

Income

Number of Household

Type of Household

UNIVERSE:

The universe of this study mainly comprises of the beneficiaries of Public Distribution System Outlets of Cherai Panchayat of Ernakulam District of Kerala.

SAMPLING METHOD:

Simple random sampling method is used in this study. The Cherai Panchayat mainly consist of 2 Public Distribution System Outlets. The data about the beneficiaries was directly collected from the PDS dealers and using simple random sampling method the respondents was randomly selected.

The sample consist of 50 beneficiaries for the study.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The tool used in this study is pre structured Questionnaire, which was used to collect data from the respondents through telephonic interview.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The collected data was analyzed and interpreted .

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the Data analysis and interpretations. This study is aimed to analyse the effectiveness of Public Distribution System in rural area during Covid 19 pandemic.

Table 4.1

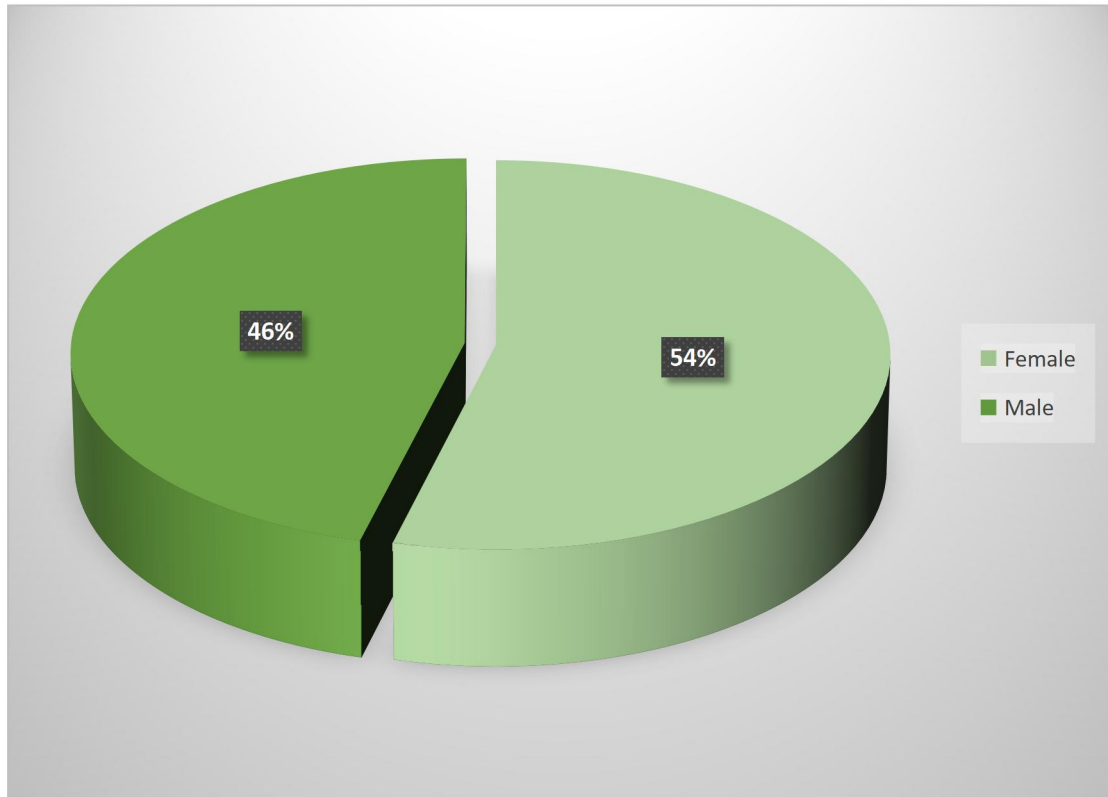
TABLE SHOWING THE AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
30-39	8	16
40-49	11	22
50-59	20	40
60-69	7	14
70-79	4	8
Total	50	100

The table 4.1 shows the age group of the respondents of this study. And it's evident that most of the respondents fell in the age group of 50 to 59 (40 percentage), followed by the age group of 40 to 49 with (22 percentage) and then by the age group of 30 to 39 with (16 percentage) and age group of 60 to 69 with (14 percentage) and last the age group of 70 to 79 with (8 percentage).

Figure 4.1

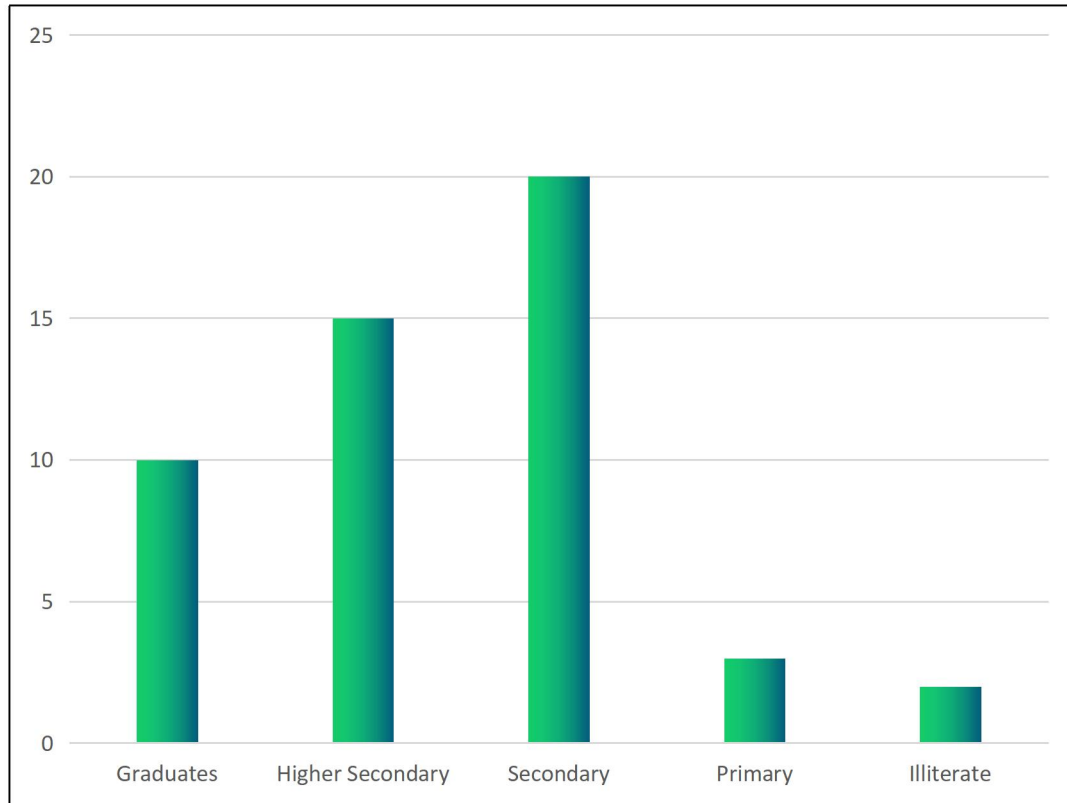
GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF SEX OF THE RESPONDENTS



The figure 4.1 depicts the graphical representation of the sex of the respondent of the study. The majority of the respondents are female with 54% and 46% of the respondents are Male.

Figure 4.2

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS



The figure 4.2 depicts the educational qualification of the respondents. Majority of the respondents have secondary level education 40% , 30% have higher secondary level education and 20% of them are Graduates. 6% of the respondents had primary level of education and 4% of the respondents were illiterate.

Figure 4.3

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

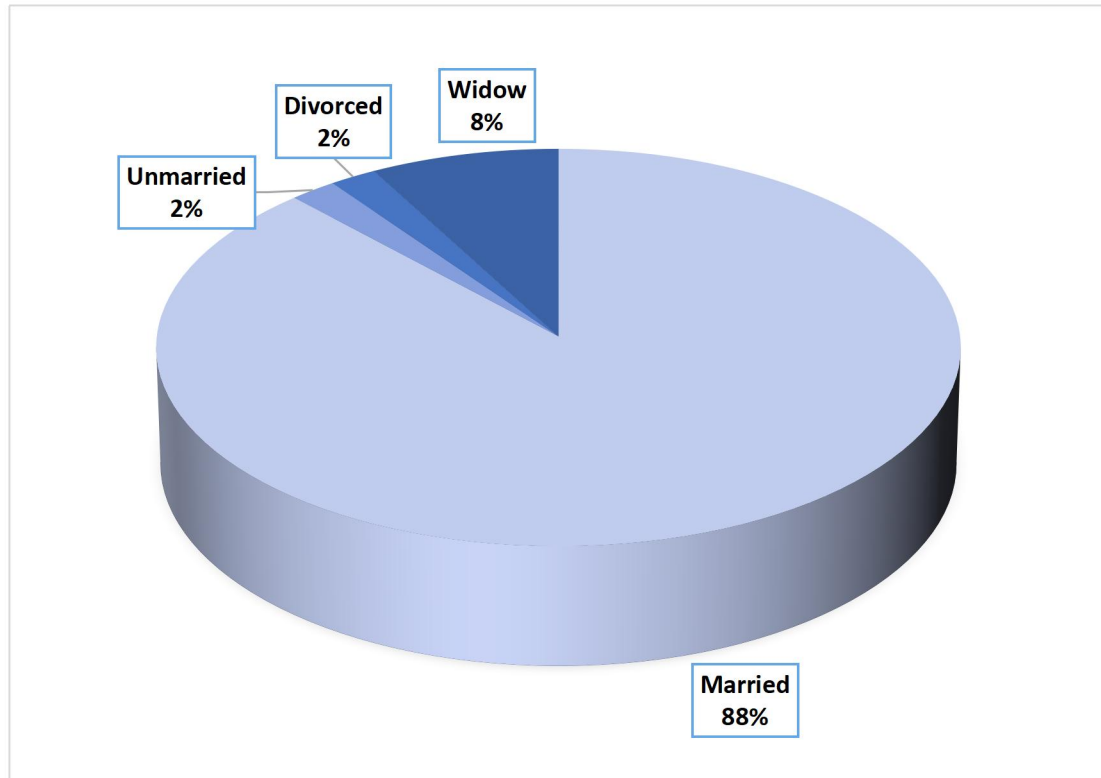


Figure 4.3 shows the graphical representation of the Marital Status of the respondents. The figure highlights that most of the respondents are married with 88 percentage. Then the remaining 2 percentage are unmarried, 2 percentage are divorced and 8 percentage of the respondents are widows.

Figure 4.4

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

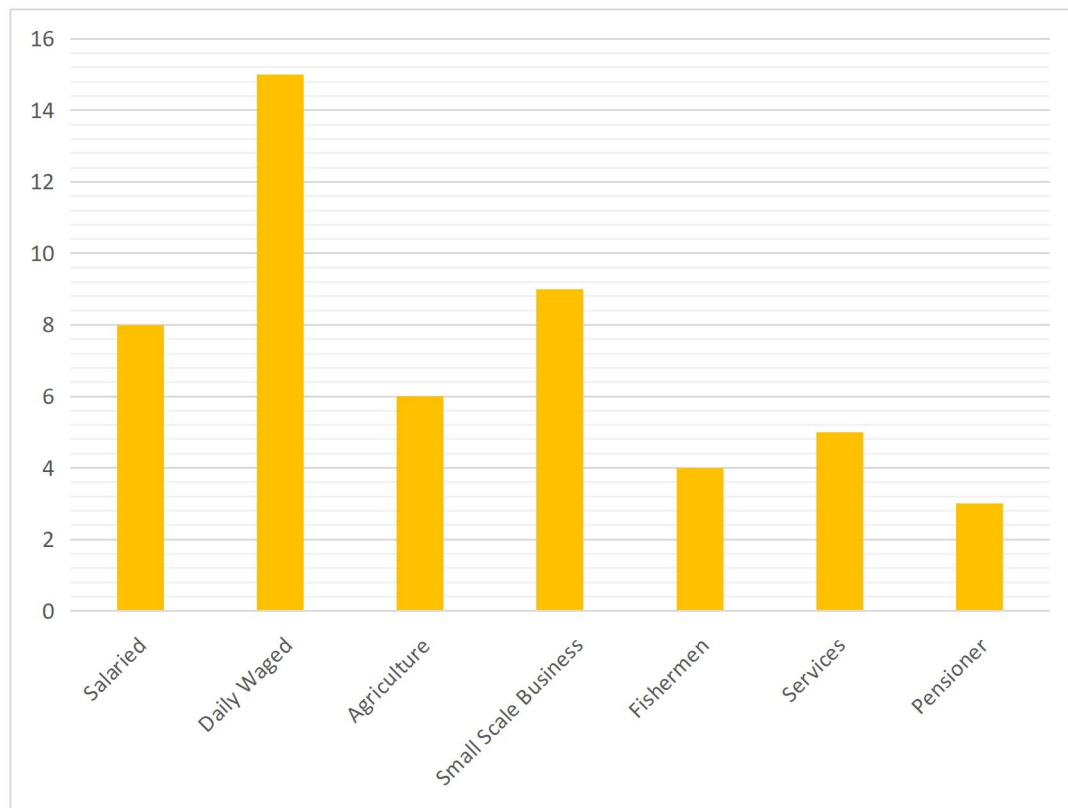


Figure 4.4 shows the occupation of the respondents. From the figure it is clear that most of the respondents are Daily Waged workers, followed by Small scale business entrepreneurs. Some of the respondents are Salaried employees, Agricultural workers. Some of the respondents are from the fishermen community. Some of them involve in the service sector and pensioners. Thus from the table it is evident that most of the respondents are Daily Waged Workers but there is diversification of occupation also to be seen.

Table 4.2

TABLE SHOWING THE FAMILY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

Family Income [Monthly]	No. of the Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Below 4000	2	4
4000-6000	7	14
6000-8000	13	26
8000-10,000	16	32
Above 10,000	12	24
Total	50	100

Table 4.2 represents the Family Income of the respondents. 4% of the respondents have monthly family income below 4000 who are mostly daily waged workers and housemaids, pensioners. 14% of the respondents are in the category of monthly income of 4000-6000, who are mainly agricultural workers and fishermen community. 26% of the respondents have a family monthly income of 6000-8000 rupees. 32% of the respondents had a family monthly income of 8000-10000 who are basically engaged in small scale businesses and respondents in the service sector. 24% of the respondents had family income above 10,000 who are basically salaried and self employed.

Figure 4.5

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

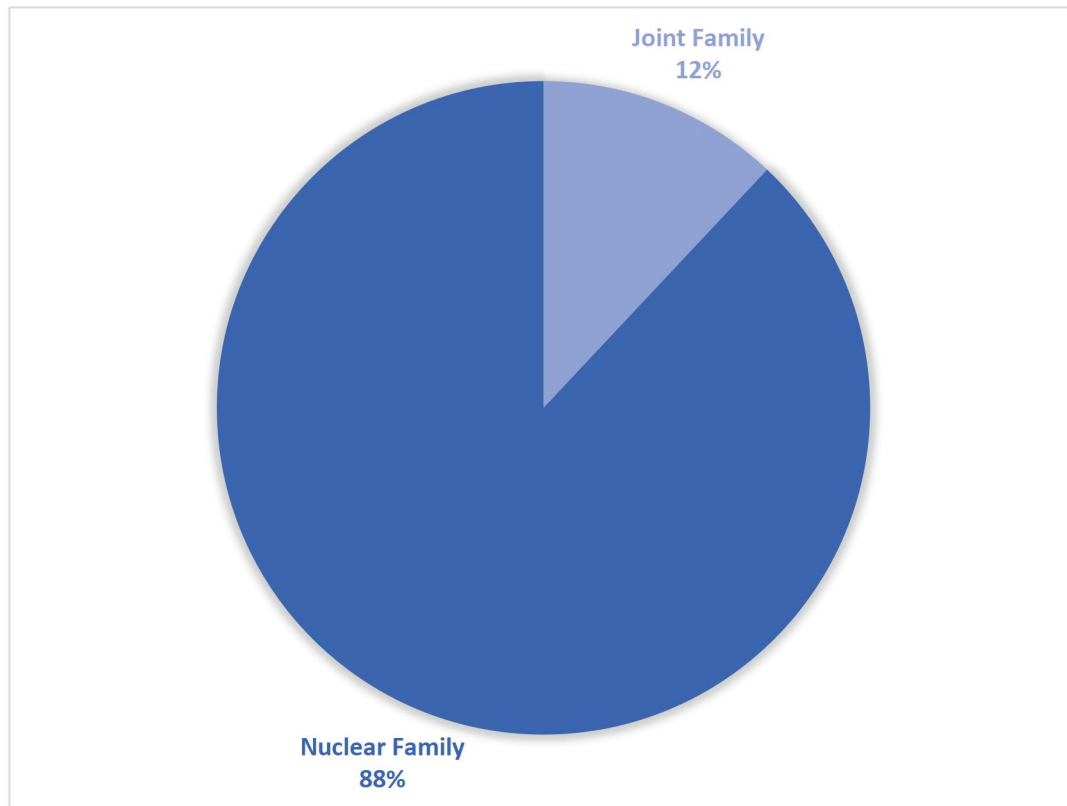


Figure 4.5 shows the type of households. From the data above it clear that most of the households are Nuclear family consisting of father, mother and children (88%). Only 12% of the respondents live in Joint Family System of Household consisting of grandparents and other cousins. Even the study is been conducted in rural area where mostly joint family system is followed compared to urban area, from the data collected shows there is a highest proportion of nuclear family present in this rural area.

Table 4.3

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Household Members	Frequency	Percentage
1-4	44	88
5-6	4	8
7-10	2	4
Total	50	100

Table 4.3 represents the Number of Household members. 88% of the respondents belong to 1-4 category which is basically nuclear family consisting of father, mother and two children. 8% of the respondents had 5-6 members in their family. 4% of the respondents had 7-10 members. These two categories follow Joint family system in this area of study.

Figure 4.6

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF TYPE OF RATION CARD

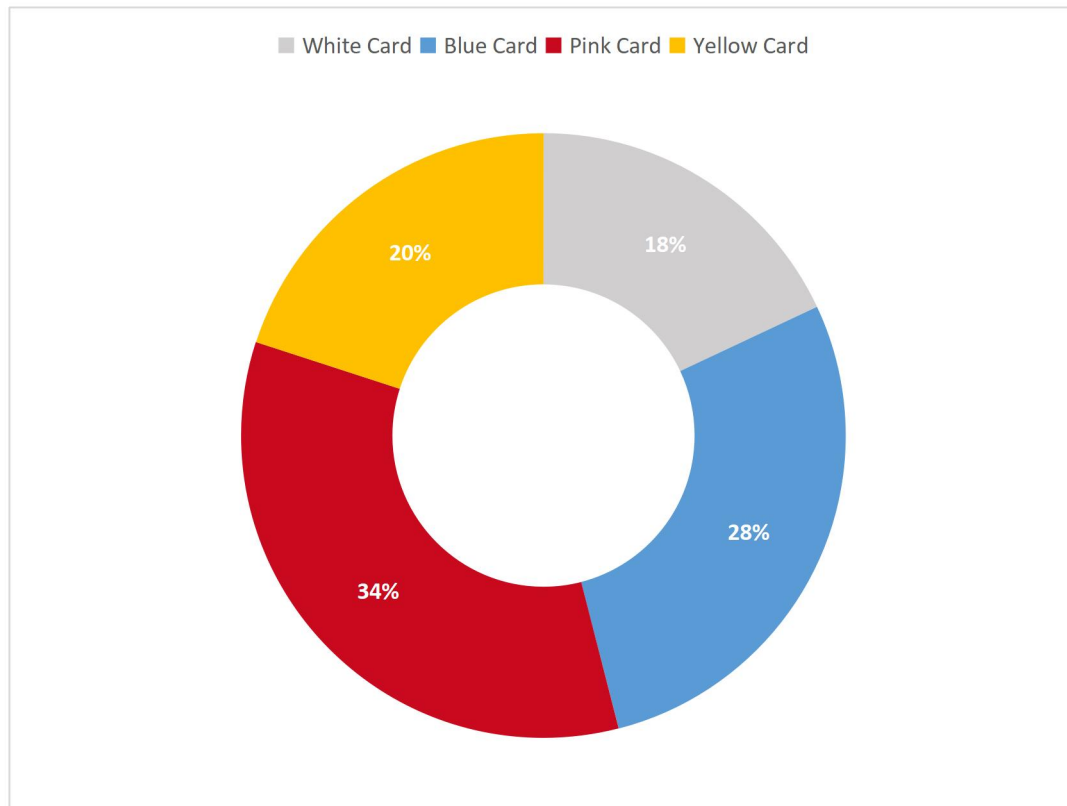


Figure 4.6 represents the Type of Ration Card of the respondents. 18% of the respondents belong to the Non Priority Non Subsidy category thus holding White Ration Card. 28% of the respondents belong to the Non Priority Subsidy category and holds Blue Ration Card. 34% of the respondents belongs to the Priority Household holding Pink Ration Card. 20% of the respondents are included in the Antyodaya Anna Yojana who holds the Yellow Ration Card. Thus from this it is clear that most of the respondents belong to the Priority household category due to their income and occupation level, who avail most of the subsidies and benefit from the Government of Kerala.

Table 4.4

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF YEARS OF RATION CARD POSSESSION

Years of Possession	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	9	18
5-10 years	13	26
10 -15 years	15	30
15-20 years	10	20
Above 20 years	3	6
Total	50	100

Table 4.4 represents the data on years of possession of ration card. 18% of the respondents had the possession of ration card for 0-5 years. 26% of the respondents possess their ration card for 5-10 years. 30% of the respondents had been possessing their ration card for 10-15 years. 20% of the respondents had been possessing their ration card for 15-20 years and 6% of the respondents had been possessing their ration card for above 20 years.

Thus from the above data it is clear that most of the respondents had been possessing their ration card since 15 to 20 years and had been availing its benefits.

Figure 4.7

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF EXPENSES INCURRED ON ACQUISITION OF RATION CARD

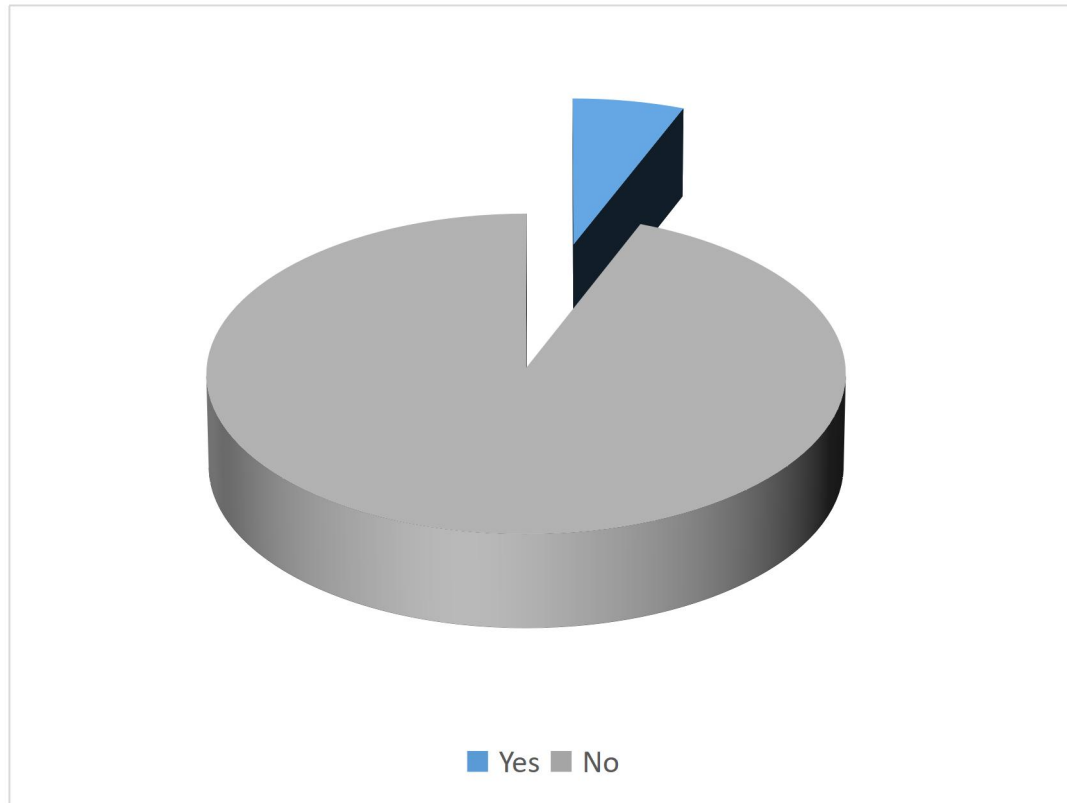


Figure 4.7 show the graphical representation on the expenses incurred by the respondents for acquisition of ration card. 94% of the respondents had not incurred any expenses while acquiring their ration card. But 6% of the respondents had incurred different expenses while the process of acquisition of their ration card.

Figure 4.8

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF USAGE OF RATION CARD BY THE RESPONDENTS

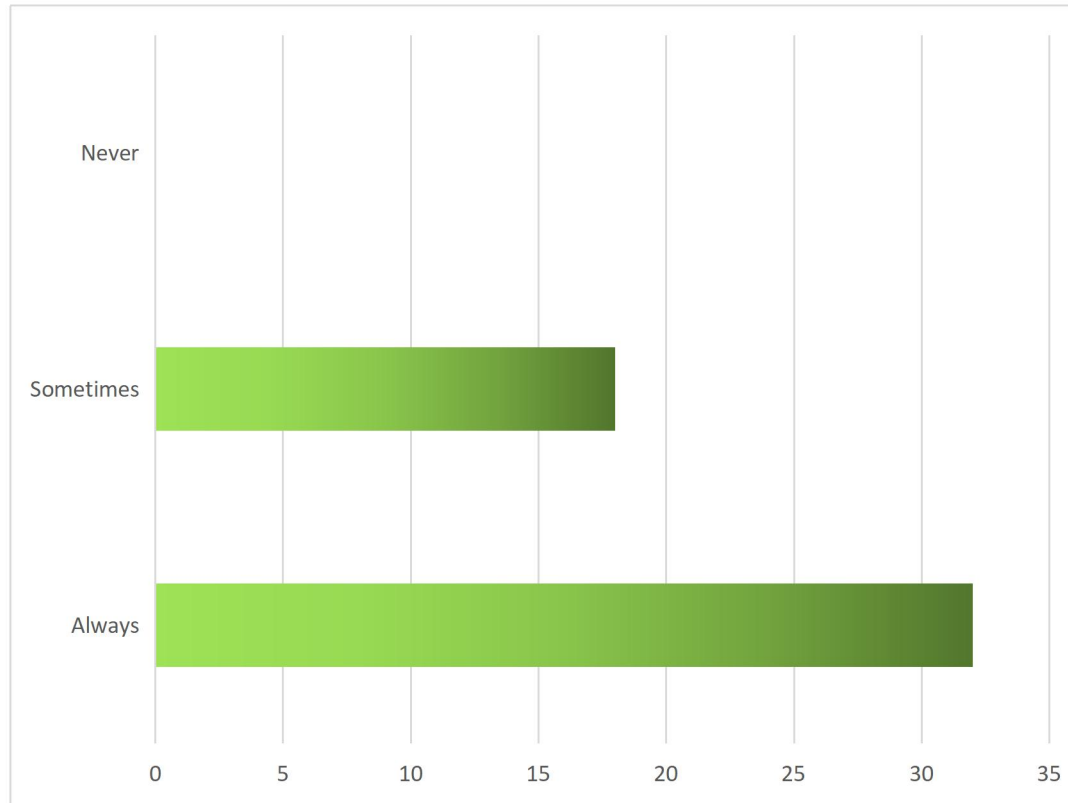


Figure 4.8 shows the graphical representation on the usage of ration card by the respondents. 64% of the respondents had been using their ration card very often and avails almost all the subsidies and benefits on their ration card. 36% of the respondents had been using their ration sometimes like for buying kerosene, availing special kit during Covid-19 pandemic period.

Figure 4.9

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF POSSESSION OF RATION CARD

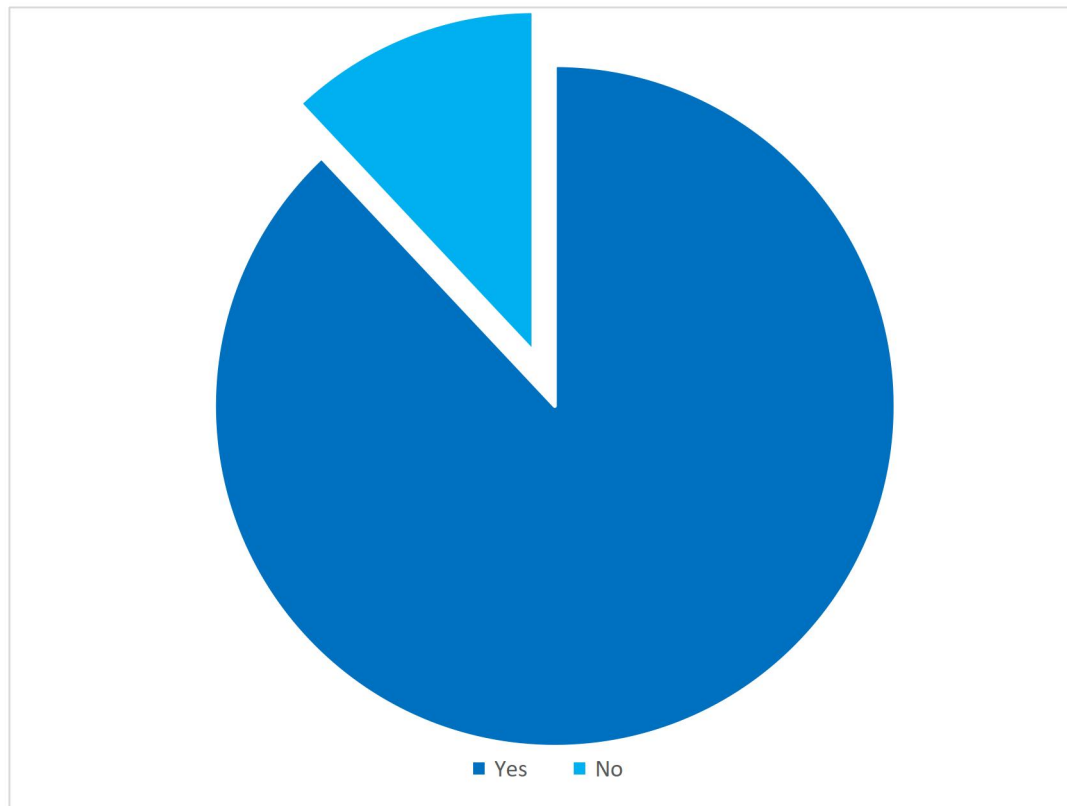


Figure 4.9 shows the graphical representation on possession of ration card. 88% of the respondents possess their ration card with themselves. But 12% of the respondents don't possess their ration card with themselves and are in possession of some relatives or friends who often use the ration card to avail the benefits and acquire the subsidies.

Figure 4.10

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF ALLOCATION OF COMMODITIES FROM RATION SHOPS

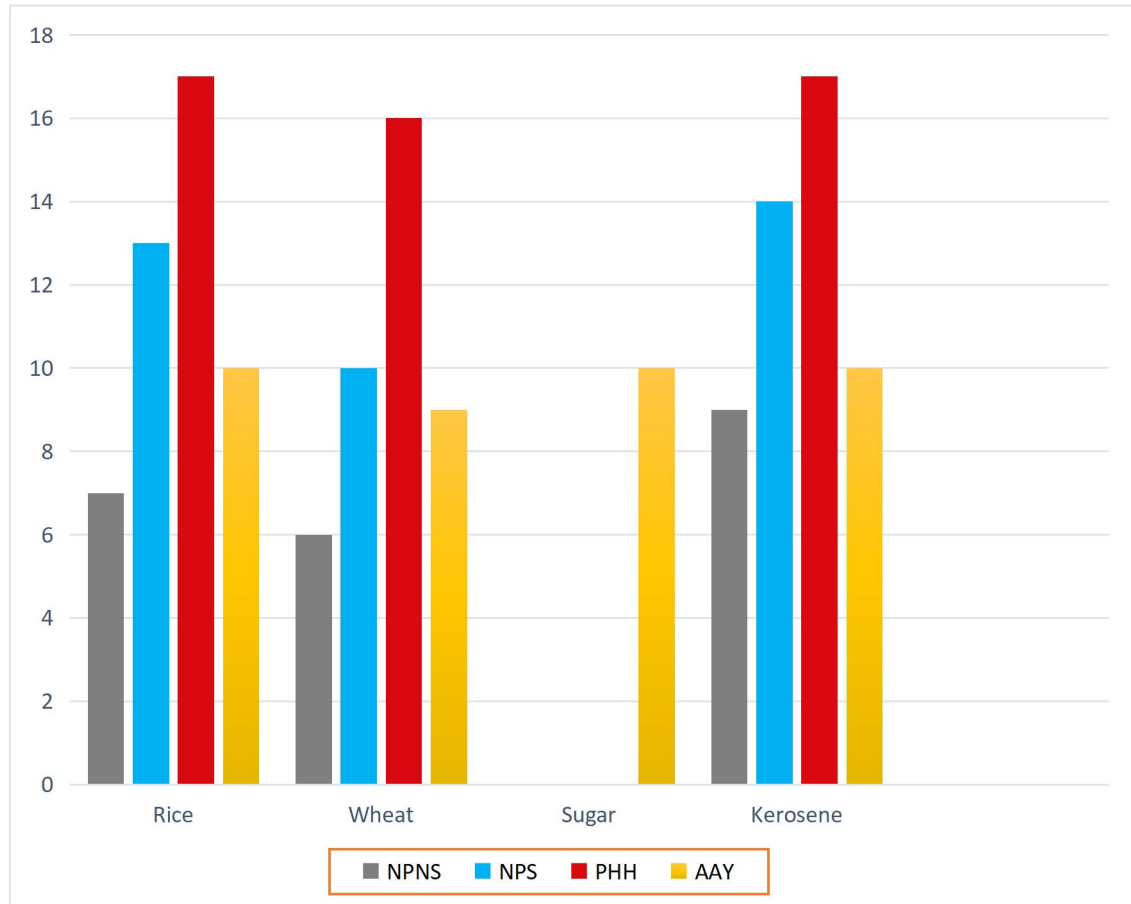


Figure 4.10 shows the graphical representation of commodities allocated and availed by the respondents.

The **NPNS (White)** cardholders, 9 out of 50 respondents (18%)

14% (7) of the respondents bought rice, 10% (5) of the respondents bought wheat, there is no allowance of sugar for non priority category and 18% (9) of the respondents bought kerosene.

The **NPS (Blue)** cardholders, 14 out of 50 respondents (28%)

Rice was bought by 26% (13) of the respondents. Wheat was bought by 20% (10) of the respondents, sugar was not allotted to blue card holders and Kerosene was bought by 28% (14) of the respondents.

The **PHH(Pink)** cardholders, 17 out of 50 respondents(34%)

Rice was bought by 34%(17) of the respondents. Wheat was bought by 32%(16) of the respondents, sugar was not allowed to pink cardholders and Kerosene was bought by 34%(17) of the respondents.

The **AAJ(Yellow)** cardholders, 10 out of 50 respondents(20%)

Rice was bought by 20%(10) of the respondents. Wheat was bought by 18%(9) of the respondents. Sugar was bought by all 20%(10) of the respondents. Kerosene was bought by every 20%(10) of the respondents.

Thus it is clear that irrespective of the card type all the respondents availed almost all the subsidies and benefits from the Ration shop.

Figure 4.11

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF ALLOCATION OF COMMODITIES
FROM RATION SHOPS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

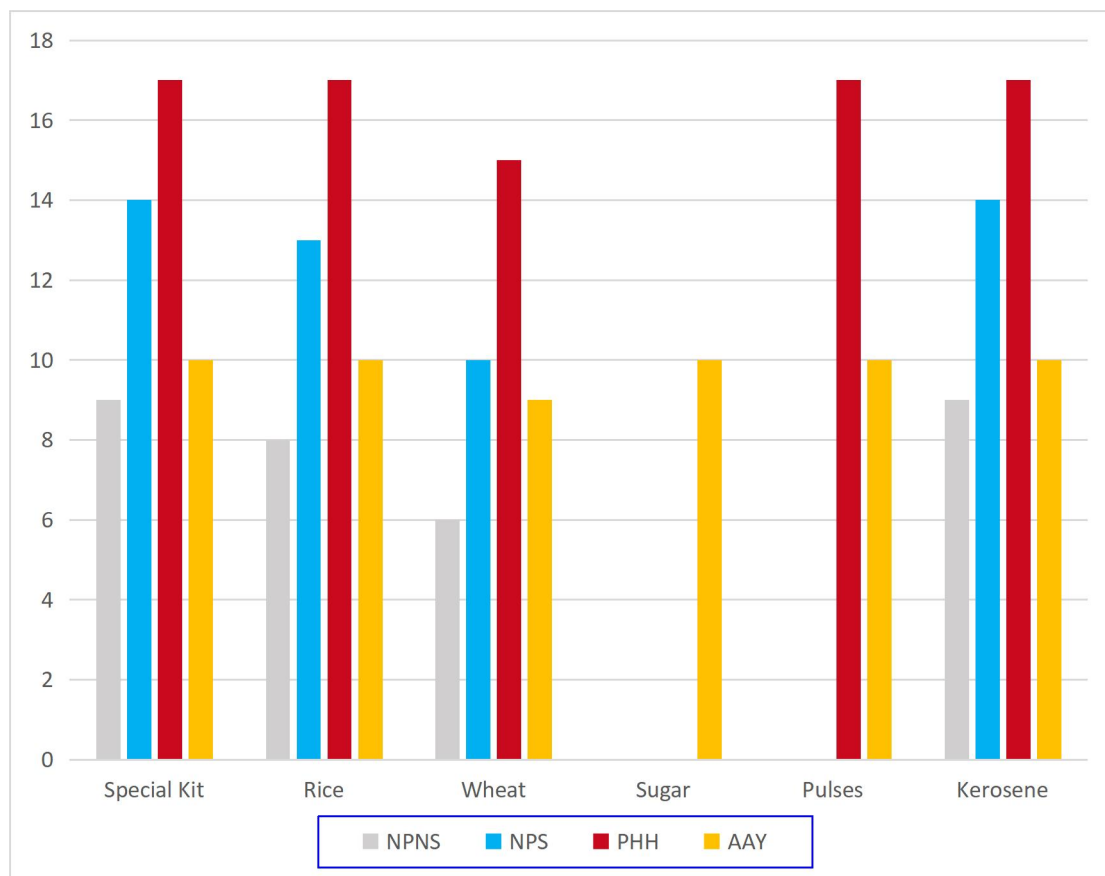


Figure 4.11 shows the graphical representation about the different commodities provided through ration shops during Covid 19 pandemic according to the respondents card type. Special kit which was provided exclusively by the Kerala State Government during Covid 19 pandemic period was availed by all the respondents irrespective of their card type.

The **NPNS(White)** cardholders 18% of the respondents,

Rice was bought by 16%(8) of the respondents. Wheat was bought by 12%(6) of the respondents. Sugar and Pulses was not allotted to this cardholders. Kerosene was bought by all the 18%(9) of the respondents.

The **NPS(Blue)** cardholders 28% of the respondents,
Rice was bought by 26%(13) the respondents. Wheat was bought by 20%(10) of the respondents. Sugar and Pulses was not allotted to this card type. Kerosene was bought by all the respondents 28%(14).

The **PHH(Pink)** cardholders 34% of the respondents,
Rice was bought by all the 34%(17) of the respondents. Wheat was bought 30%(15) of the respondents. Sugar was not allotted to this cardholders. Pulses were allotted to this category during Covid-19 and all the 34% of the respondents brought their subsidy. Kerosene was bought by all the respondents.

The **AAJ(Yellow)** cardholders 20%(10) of the respondents,
Rice was bought by all the cardholders. 18% (9) of the respondents bought Wheat. Sugar as well as pulses were bought by all the 20% of the respondents. Kerosene was also bought by all the 20% of the respondents.

Figure 4.12

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF PRICING OF COMMODITIES

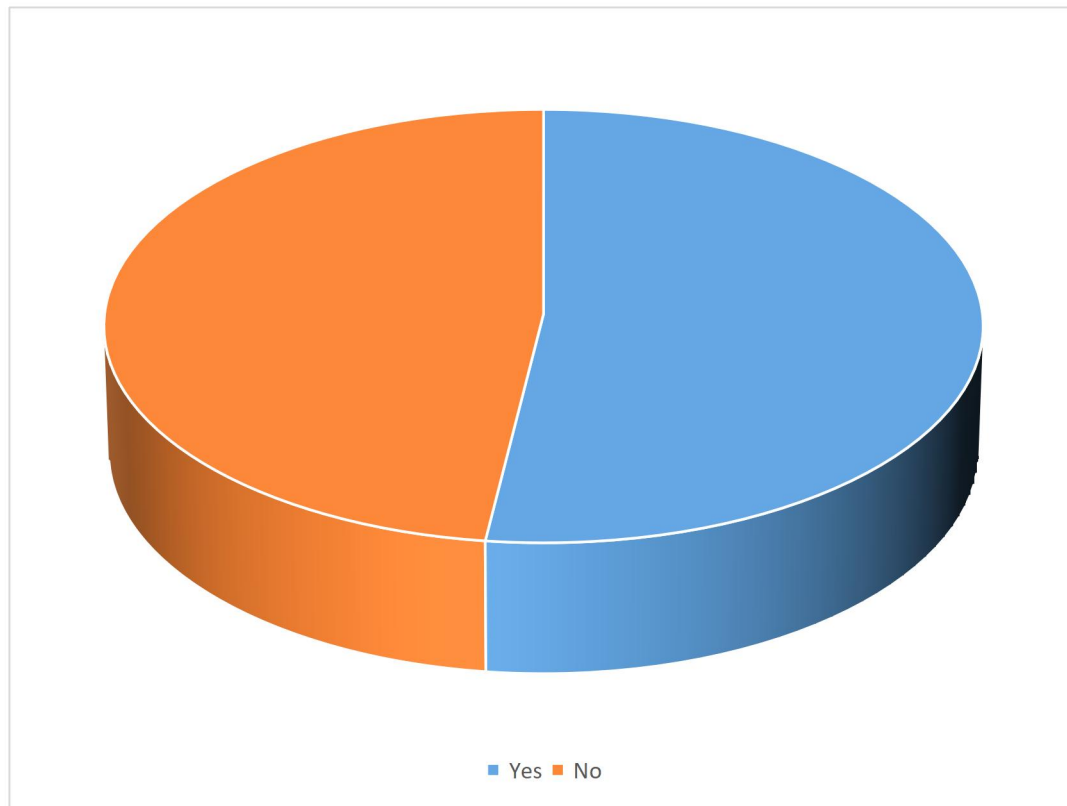


Figure 4.12 shows the graphical representation where the respondents have to pay more or pay less during the Covid 19 pandemic period. 52% of the respondents says they have to pay more during and after the Covid 19 pandemic period. Respondents belonging to the non- priority category as well as NPS had to pay more for commodities after the occurrence of Covid-19 pandemic. 48% of the respondents said they where needed to pay less now compared to previous times which basically included the Priority Category.

Figure 4.13

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF QUOTA OF COMMODITIES FOR ANY MONTH AWAITED

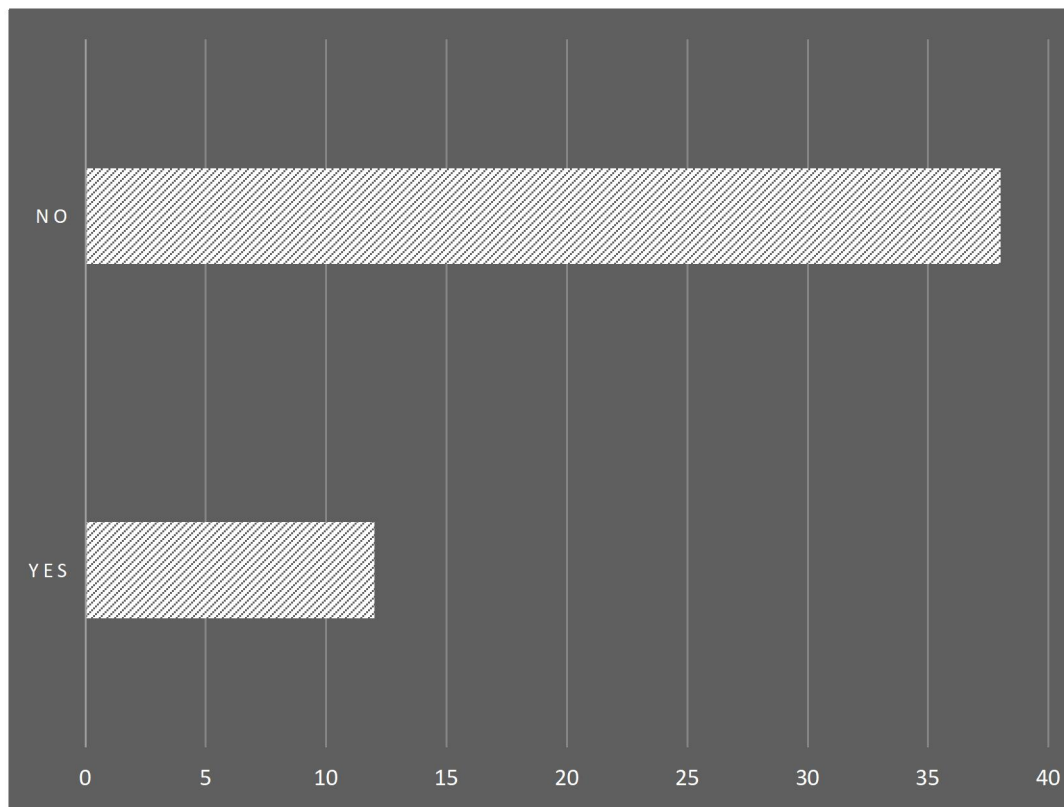


Figure 4.13 shows the graphical representation of any quota for the month awaited for the respondents by the PDS dealers. 76% of the respondents conveyed that their quotas are provided accordingly. 24% of the respondents conveyed that they still awaits their quota for previous month. The main reasons told by the dealer are unavailability of commodities at that time, storage issues etc..

Figure 4.14

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF MISSAPPROPRIATION OF QUOTA FOR A MONTH

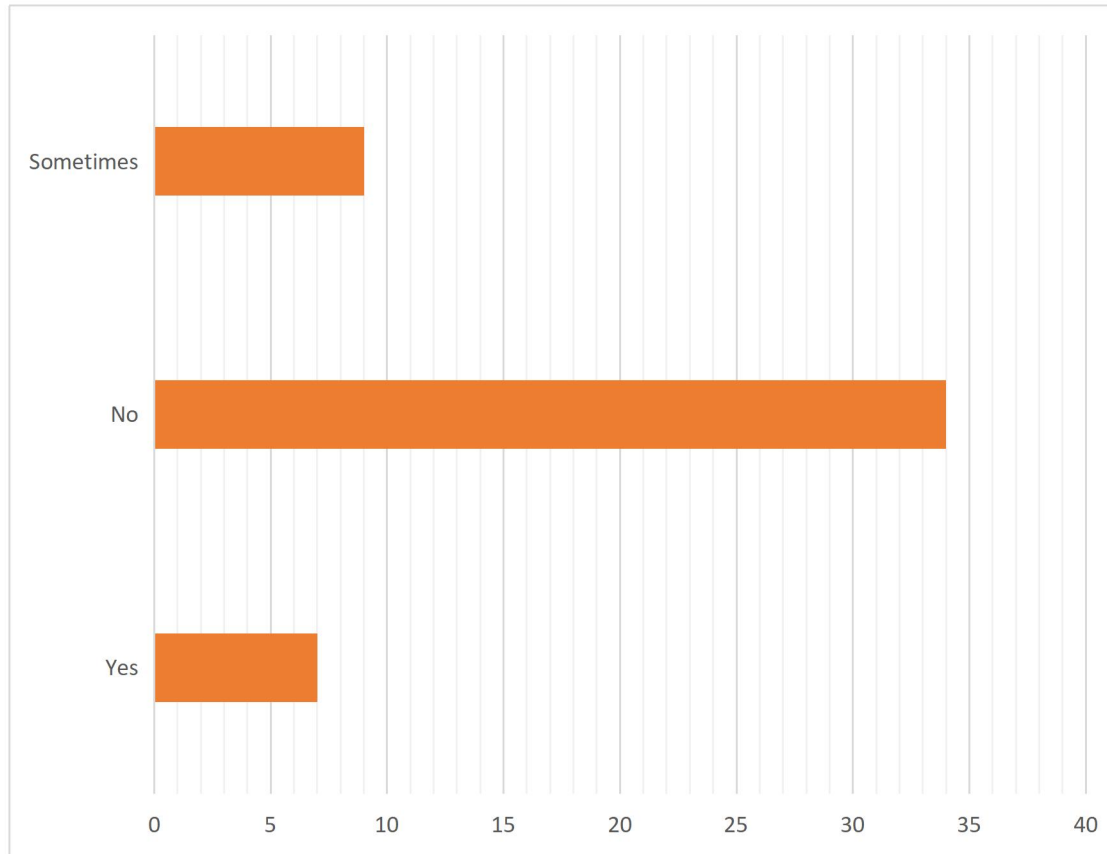


Figure 4.14 is the graphical representation on respondents responses to any instances of any appropriation made by the Ration Shop owners. 68% of the total respondents said they haven't noticed any such instances of appropriation made by the Ration shop owner. 18% of the total respondents have sometime noticed such instances. 14% of the total respondents have noticed such appropriations made by the PDS dealers.

Figure 4.15

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF IRREGULARITIES IN MAINTENANCE OF RATION CARD

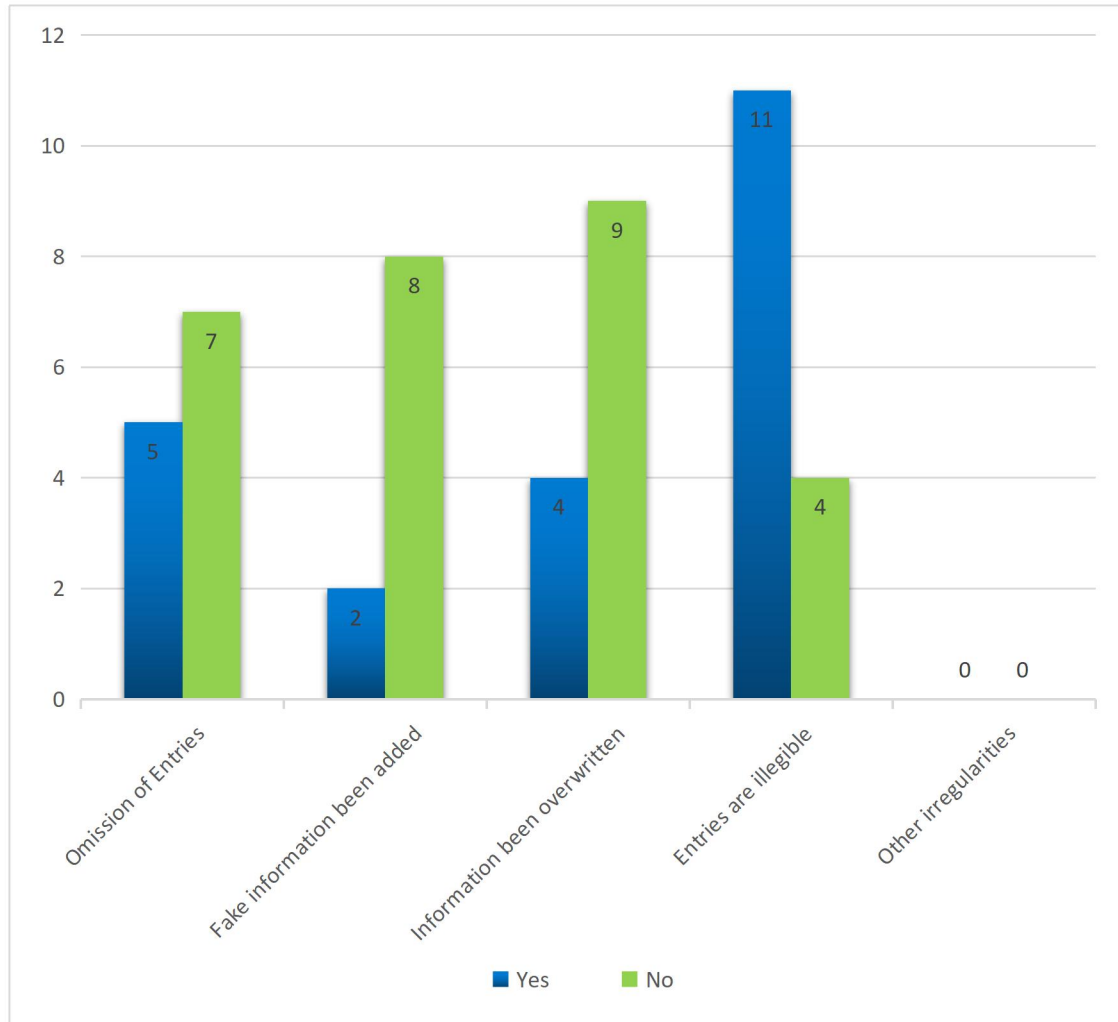


Figure 4.15 displays the graphical representation of the irregularities found out by the respondents during the maintenance of the Ration Card. Most of the respondents highlighted the option Entries are illegible and difficult to understand. This is one of the main issues faced by majority of the customers. Some of the respondents have noticed omission of entries made by the dealers, few have noticed fake information been added. Few of the respondents have noticed information been overwritten by the dealers.

Figure 4.16

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF REASONS BY PDS DEALERS FOR NOT GIVING FULL QUOTA

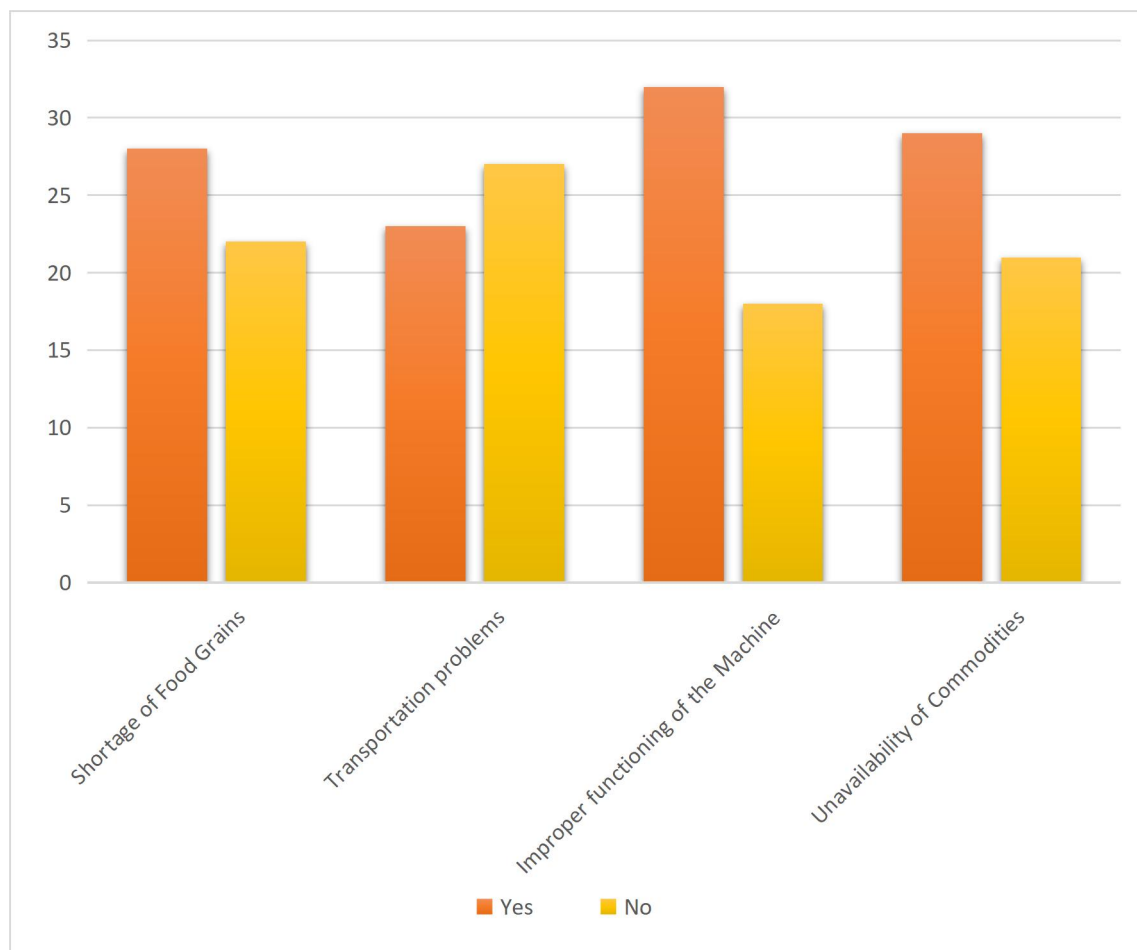


Figure 4.16 shows the graphical representation about the reason behind not providing full quota of ration by the Ration Shop Owners. Most of the respondents supported the statement 'Improper functioning of the Machine' reason told by the Ration shop owners which act as a hindrance for acquiring full quota ration for a month. The other reasons highlighted by the respondents are Unavailability of Commodities at the time of delivery, Shortage of food grains and Transportation issues that delays the arrival of the commodities which in turn affects the distribution via Ration Shops.

Figure 4.17

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF AVAILABILITY OF BENEFITS AND
SUBSIDIES FROM RATION SHOPS

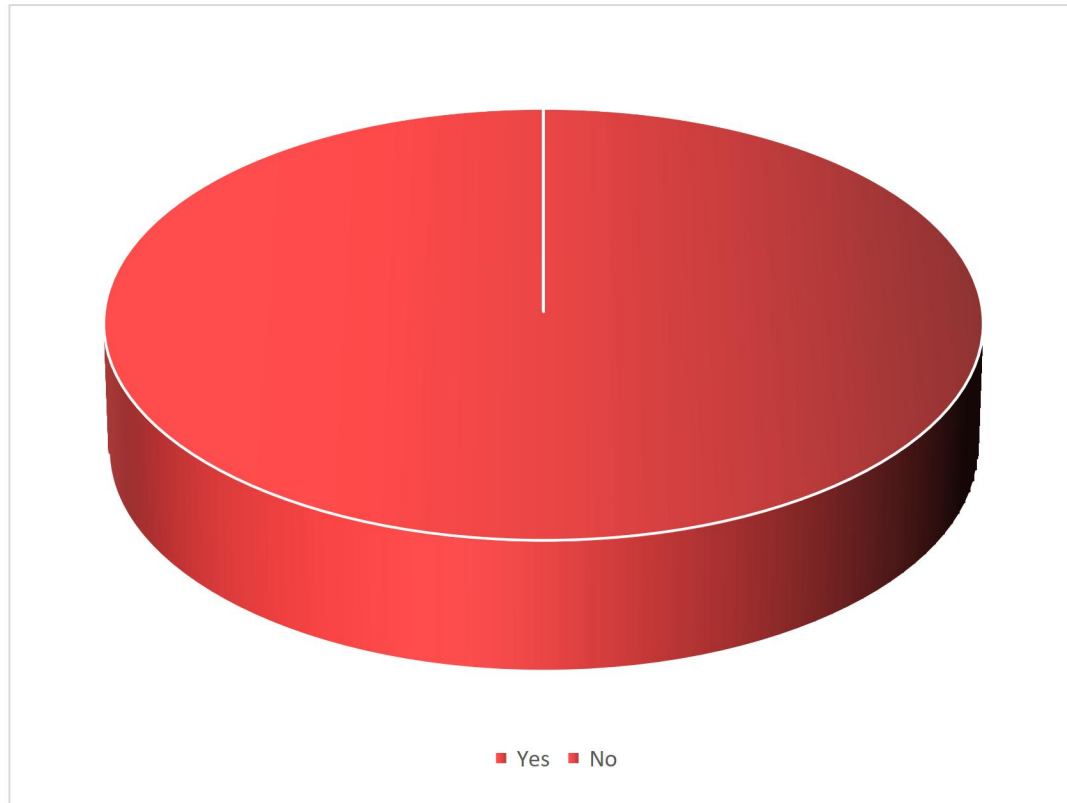


Figure 4.17 shows the graphical representation about the respondents ability to avail benefits and support measures provided by the Government via Ration Shops or PDS outlet. All the respondents (100%) where able to avail all the benefits and support measures which was provided by the Central as well as the State Governments during Covid 19 pandemic periods from the Ration Shops. It shows the effective functioning of the Public Distirbution System in the area.

Figure 4.18

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS VISITING RATION SHOPS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

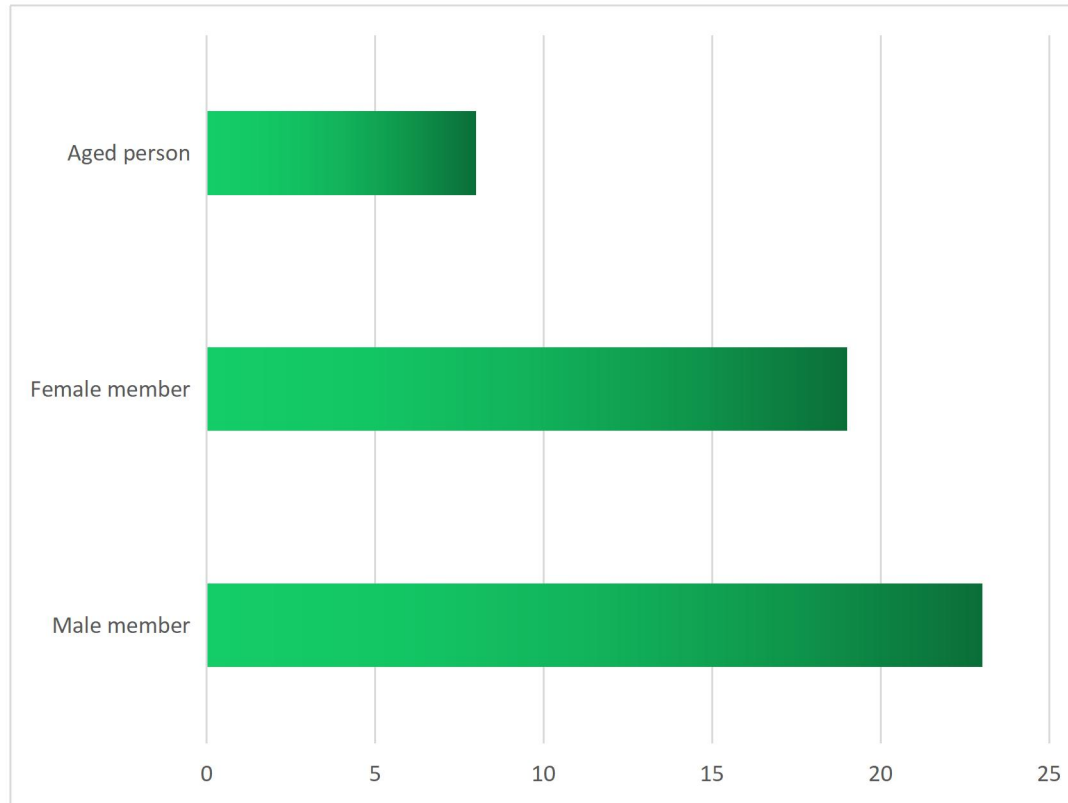


Figure 4.18 shows the graphical representation about the respondents frequent visit to the ration shops during the Covid 19 pandemic period. Here the male members of the family usually shopped during the Covid period (46%), followed by female members (38%) and aged persons 16%. Thus most of the male members from the family of the respondents visited Ration shops during Covid 19 pandemic period.

Figure 4.19

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF QUALITY OF FOOD GRAINS

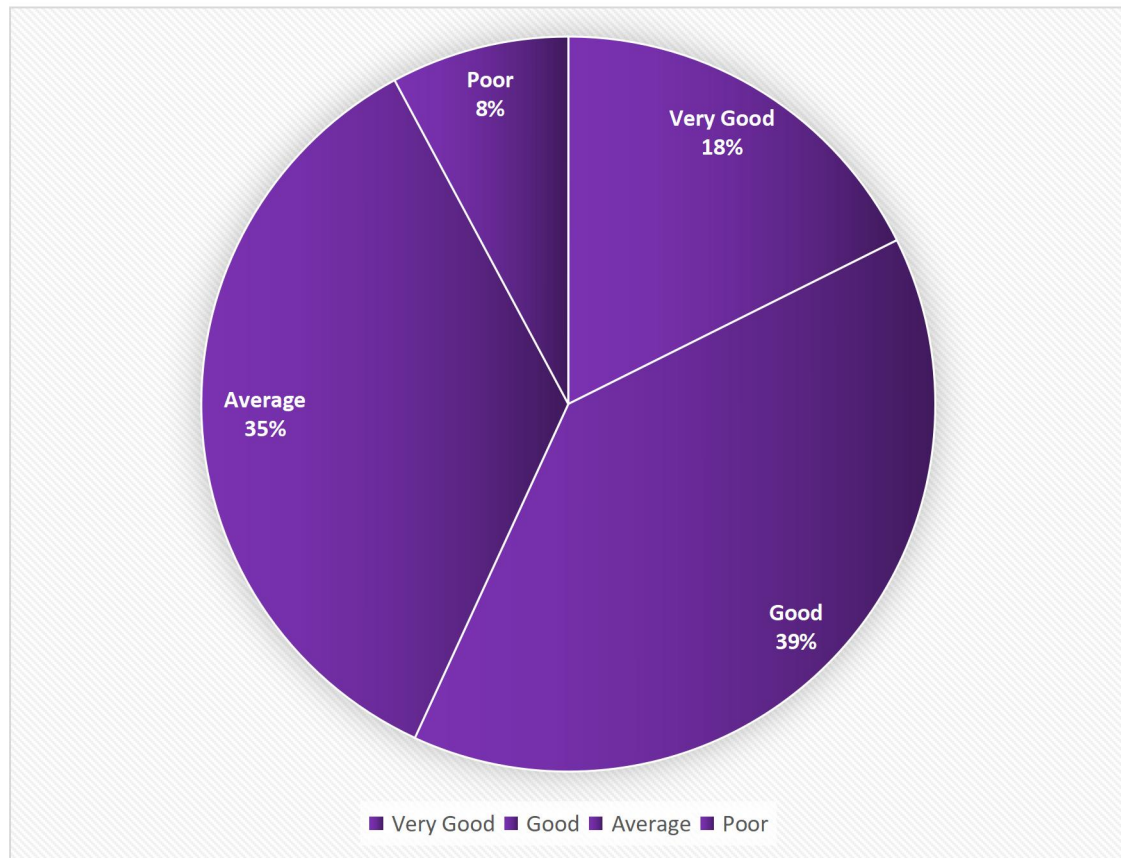


Figure 4.19 shows the graphical representation on the Quality of the grains received from the PDS outlet. 18% of the total respondents rated the Quality of the grains provided by the Ration shops as very good. 39% of the total respondents rated the quality of the grains as good and 35% of the respondents rated the quality of the grains and commodities provided to them as average, 8% of the respondents showed the quality of the grains as poor and unhealthy.

Figure 4.20

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF ATTITUDE OF THE PDS DEALER

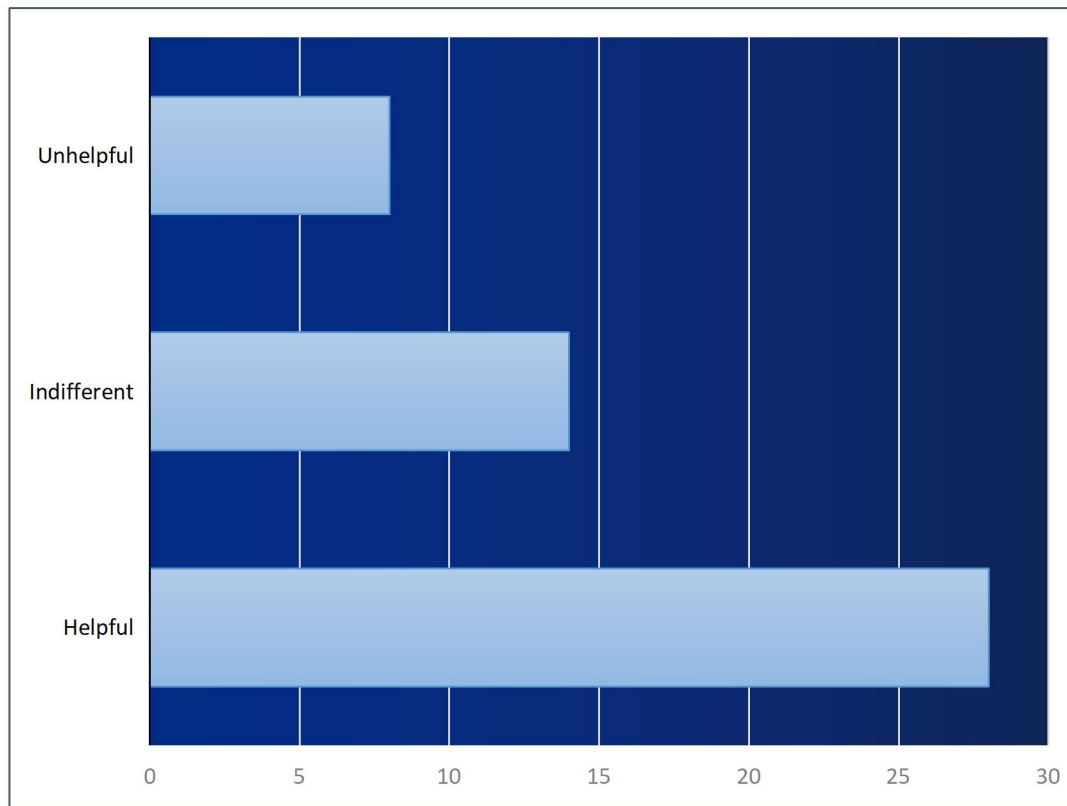


Figure 4.20 provides the graphical representation of the attitude of the PDS dealer rated accordingly by the respondents. 56% of the respondents described the attitude shown by the PDS dealers as helpful, the Ration shop owners provided them with adequate information regarding the subsidies and benefits. 28% of the respondents described the attitude of the PDS dealer as indifferent and 16% of the total respondents described the attitude of the PDS dealer as unhelpful and disappointing.

Figure 4.21

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF INFORMATION SHARED BY THE PDS DEALER REGARDING THE POLICIES AND SCHEMES BY THE GOVERNMENT

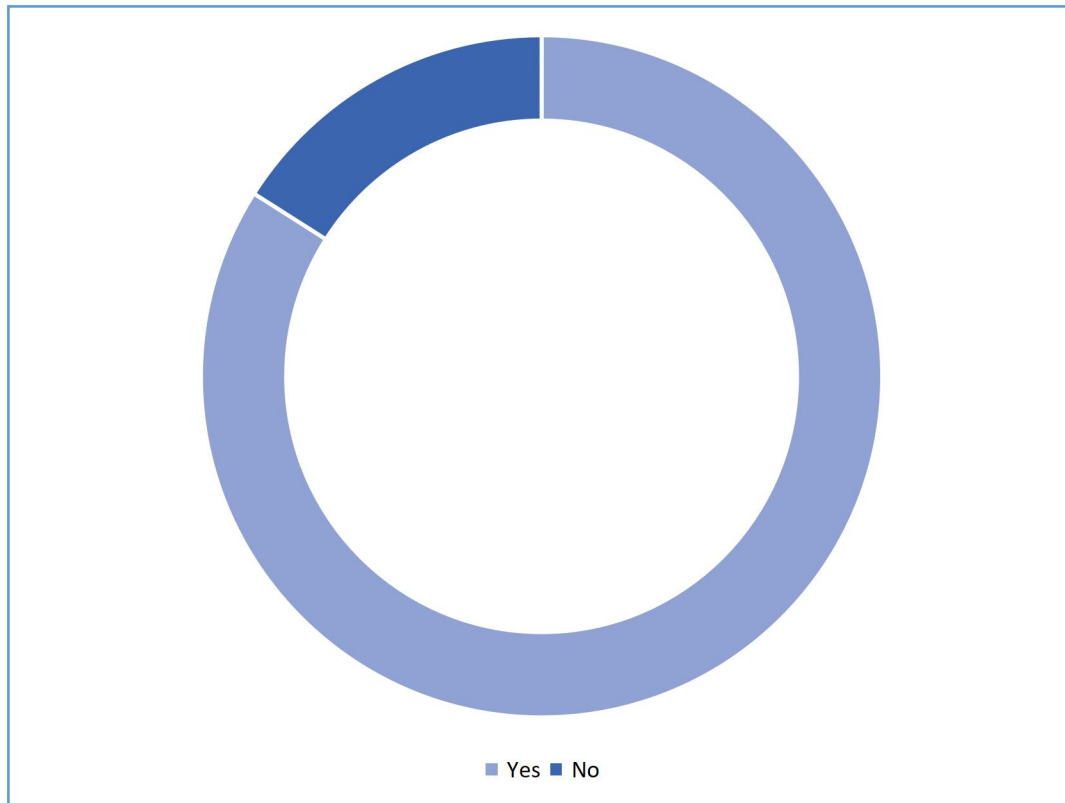


Figure 4.21 shows the graphical representation on the PDS dealer approach in providing sufficient information regarding new policies, plans and changes made by the Government. 84% of the respondents supported this statement, their Ration Shop owners in regular intervals provided them with sufficient information regarding new benefits and policy changes by the Government which helped them in getting maximum benefit and support from the PDS outlets. Whereas, 16% of the respondents showed their regret towards their PDS dealers as they are not provided with sufficient information regarding the new policies and plan which in turn make them lose their subsidies and benefits derived out from these PDS Outlets.

Figure 4.22

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF SATISFATION ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PDS OUTLET

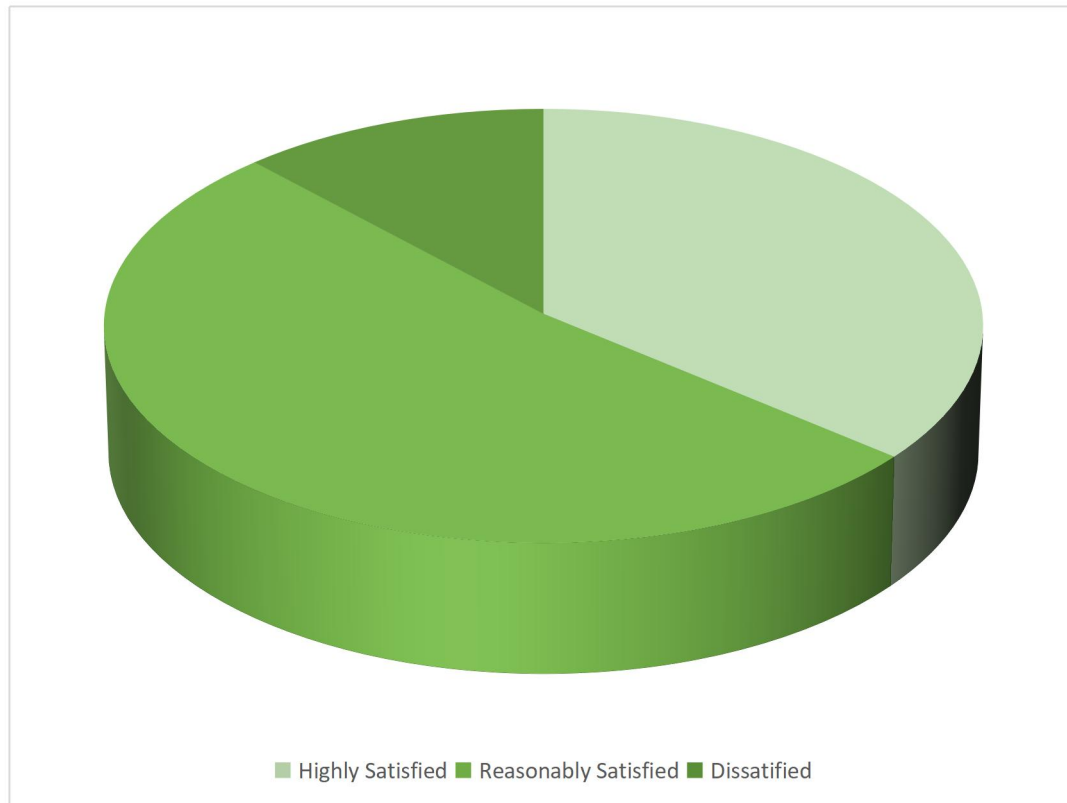


Figure 4.22 shows the level of satisfaction on the functioning of the PDS outlet. 36% of the population are highly satisfied with the functioning of the PDS outlet. 52% of the respondents are reasonably satisfied with the overall functioning of the PDS outlet, and 12% of the respondents showed their dissatisfaction towards the functioning of the PDS outlet in their locality.

Figure 4.23

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION ON RATING OF OVERALL FUNCTIONING OF THE PDS OUTLET

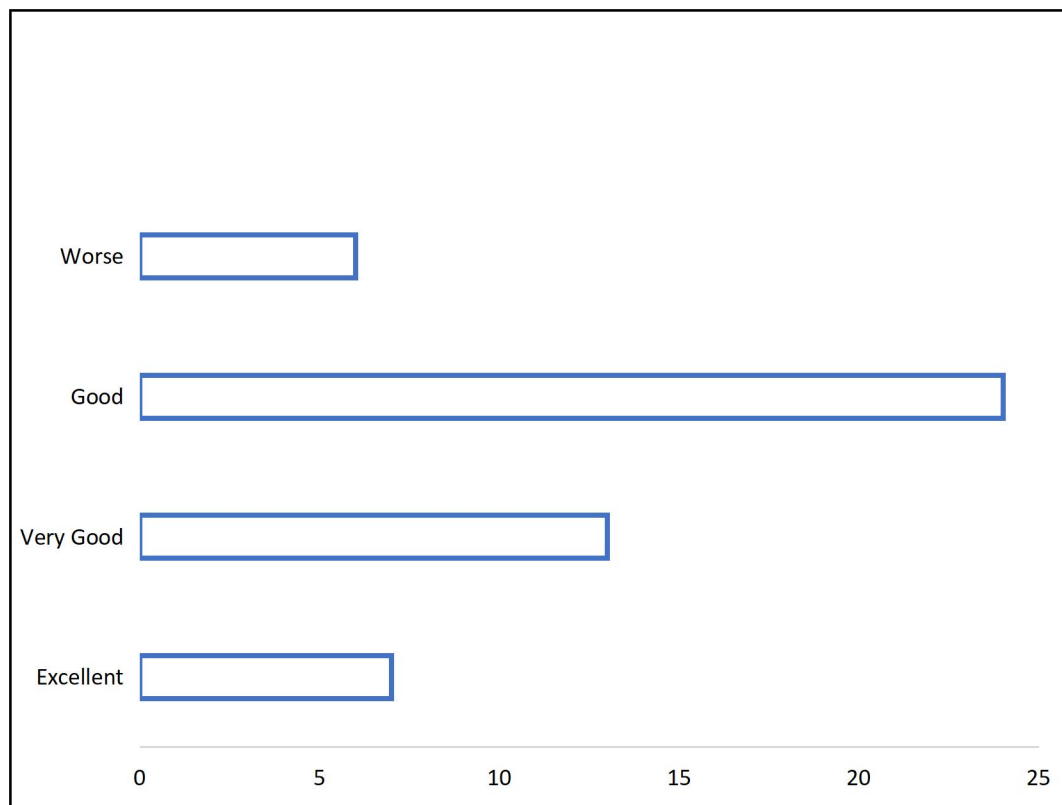


Figure 4.23 shows the ratings given by the respondents on the overall functioning of the Public Distribution System Outlets in Cherai village. 48% of the respondents rated the functioning of the PDS outlet as good, 26% of the respondents rated the functioning of the PDS outlet as Very good and 14% of the respondents rated the functioning of the PDS outlet as Excellent. 12% of the respondents rated the functioning of PDS outlet as worse. Thus from this it is clear that most of the respondents rated the functioning of the PDS outlet as good in their locality.

**FINDINGS, SUGGESTION AND
CONCLUSION**

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Public Distribution System (PDS) evolved as a system of management of scarcity and for distribution of food grains at affordable prices. Over the years, PDS has become an important part of Government's policy for management of food economy in the country. PDS is supplemental in nature and is not intended to make available the entire requirement of any of the commodities distributed under it to a household or a section of the society. PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments. The Central Government, through Food Corporation of India (FCI), has assumed the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of food grains to the State Governments. The operational responsibility including allocation within State, identification of eligible families, issue of Ration Cards and supervision of the functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) etc., rest with the State Governments. Under the PDS, presently the commodities namely wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene are being allocated to the States/UTs for distribution.

The Government of Kerala (GoK) has been fast implementing the provisions of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 and identifying the eligible households. In Kerala, the renewal of existing ration cards coincided with the statutory provisions of the NFSA.

The first objective of the study was to find out the benefits derived out of Public Distribution System during Covid 19 pandemic. In the sample of 50 respondents, the majority of the respondents (40%) belong to the middle age group. 54% of the respondents were female and 46% of the respondents were male. Majority of the respondents (40%) had secondary level educational qualification. 30% of the respondents belong to the daily waged category and 18% of the respondents engaged in small scale business. As this study was conducted in rural area the family income of the respondents (32%) were between 8000-10000. The majority of the respondents (88%) were nuclear family and 12% of the respondents followed joint family system.

The second objective was to study the problems related to the implementation of public distribution system. The majority of the respondents had PHH Pink ration card (34%) followed by NPS blue ration cardholders (28%), AAY yellow cardholders (20%) and NPNS White cardholders (18%). 64% of the respondents always use their ration card to avail the benefits from the ration shops. 88% of the respondents are in possession of their ration card.

The 52% of the respondents said they had to pay more for the commodities during and after Covid 19 pandemic. Majority of the respondents 76% conveyed that their quotas are provided accordingly. This shows the effective functioning of ration shops in rural area.

The third objective was to find out the suggestions given by beneficiaries.

52% of the respondents are reasonably satisfied with the functioning of the PDS outlet.

46% of the respondents rated the overall functioning of the ration shop as good.

The suggestions are:-

- To be informed about the time and availability of the grains in the ration shop by the distributors.
- The entries must be made legible.
- The technical problems of the machine to be solved in time.
- The consumers are to be provided with proper billing.
- The server related issues to be rectified.
- The effectiveness of the biometric machine should be ensured.
- The government should ensure the proper control and effective distribution of commodities and subsidies.

From the study it was clear that majority of the respondents availed their benefits from the ration shops irrespective of the lockdown and restrictions due to Covid 19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Kerala is a chronically food deficit state with internal production meeting less than one-fifth of its food grain requirements. In Kerala, the agricultural production has historically been geared towards cash crops instead of food crops like rice and wheat. Rationing had always existed in the state though its coverage was expanded in the mid 1960s. In 1960, when there was a general food shortage in India, several states had imposed arbitrary restrictions on the food grain movement. Consequently, the problem of food shortage became more acute in Kerala. The decision to extend the rationing system in Kerala was taken at the Conference of the Chief Ministers of all the states in 1964, whereby it was agreed that the quantity of rice required for issue through the PDS would be made available from the respective central storage depots and that it would not be generally necessary for the state government to procure any quota directly from other states. In other words, the expansion of the PDS in the state was based on a tacit understanding between the centre and the state government with the former taking the responsibility of adequate food availability to meet the state's food requirements. The historical background of expansion of the rationing system in Kerala amply demonstrates the role of the PDS as a system essential for food security in an acute food deficit state. To now consider the system as a mere concession to the poor would be a drastic dilution to this historically well defined role.

The Public Distribution System in Kerala is much more effective and efficient compared to other states. But due to the lower production of food grains (rice, wheat) makes Kerala to depend upon different states and the distribution of these items depends on the transportation and availability of the grains in the Government warehouses.

During the Covid 19 Pandemic scenario the role played by Public distribution System is comment-able and is nationwide appreciated because due to its effective working and poverty alleviation in the State.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age:

2. Sex: Female Male

3. Educational Level:

4. Marital Status:

5. Occupation:

6. Family Income:

7. Type of Household:

8. Number of Household Members:

	Female	Male
Children		
Adults		
Aged Persons		

9. Type of Ration Card:

White Blue Pink Yellow

10. How many years of having this Ration Card ?

11. Did you had to pay anyone any amount to obtain your Ration Card or for other associated expenses?

Yes No

12. Are you using the Ration Card, How Often ?

13. Are you in possession of your Ration Card at this moment or is it with someone else?

Yes No

14. Can you tell what all commodities you are allotted according to your Ration Card from the PDS Outlet?

Rice

Wheat

Sugar

Pulses

Kerosene

15. After the occurrence of Covid-19 Pandemic, what all commodities are you able to avail from the PDS outlet?

Special Kit

Rice

Wheat

Sugar

Pulses

Kerosene

16. Do you need to pay more or pay less for the commodities now ?

Yes

No

17. Is the quota for any of month still awaited ?

Yes

No

18. Has it ever occurred that your quota for a particular month not given or appropriated by someone else ?

Yes

No

Sometimes

19. Have you ever noticed any irregularities from below in the maintenance of the Ration Card?

	Yes	No
Omission of Entries		
Fake information been added		
Information been overwritten		
Entries are illegible		
Other irregularities		

20. What are the main reasons that the PDS dealer usually say when you are not getting the full quota ?

	Yes	No
Shortage of Food Grains		
Transportation problems		
Improper functioning of the Machine		
Unavailability of Commodities		
No issues		

21. During Covid 19 Pandemic scenario were you been able to avail all the benefits and support measures provided by the Government via Ration Shops?

Yes

No

22. Who is going from your family to purchase commodities from PDS Outlet during Covid 19 pandemic period ?

Male member

Female member

Aged Persons

23. How would you describe the Quality of the grains received ?

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

24. How would you describe the attitude of the PDS dealer?

Helpful

Indifferent

Unhelpful

25. Does the PDS dealer provide you with sufficient information's regarding new policies, plan and changes made by the Government ?

Yes

No

26. Are you satisfied with the functioning of the PDS outlet ?

Highly satisfied

Reasonably satisfied

Dissatisfied

27. How would you rate the overall functioning of the PDS Outlet ?

Excellent

Very good

Good

Worse

28. Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of the PDS ?