

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.120
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14TH DECEMBER, 2022

EXTENSION OF FREE FOODGRAINS DISTRIBUTION SCHEME

†*120. SHRI KUNWAR PUSHPENDRA SINGH CHANDEL:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to continue the free foodgrains distribution scheme for a longer period to extend the benefit to more than 80 crore citizens and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has taken additional measures to meet the target of storage of essential foodgrains for food security under the said scheme and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government also proposes to distribute coarse grains and milk in economically backward regions like Bundelkhand under the said scheme; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD &
PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND TEXTILES
(SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO.120 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 14.12.2022 IN THE LOK SABHA

(a): The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) has been extended for a further period of 3 months upto December, 2022 (Phase VII). In the wake of economic disruptions caused by the unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19 in the country, the Government in March 2020 had announced the distribution of additional free-of-cost foodgrains (Rice/Wheat) to about 80 Crore National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries at the scale of 5 Kg per person per month under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY), over and above the regular monthly NFSA foodgrains i.e. regular entitlements of their ration cards, so that the poor, needy and the vulnerable households/beneficiaries do not suffer on account of non-availability of adequate foodgrains during the times of economic crisis. The total approximate financial implication of about Rs.3.91 lakh crore under PMGKAY is entirely borne by the Government of India without any sharing by the States/UTs.

Initially in 2020-21, to ameliorate the hardships faced by the poor and needy due to economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, the PM-GKAY scheme was announced only for a period of three months of April, May and June 2020 (i.e. Phase-I). Later, keeping in view the continuous need to support the food-security of poor and the needy beneficiaries, the Government had extended the distribution of free-foodgrains for a further period of five months from July to November 2020 (i.e. Phase-II).

However, with the COVID-19 crisis continuing in 2021-22, the Government in April 2021 had again announced the distribution of free foodgrains under PM-GKAY for a period of two months of May and June 2021 (i.e. Phase-III) and extended it for another five months from July to November 2021 (i.e. Phase-IV). Thereafter, in November 2021, keeping in view the continuing hardship induced by COVID-19, GoI had decided to further continue the distribution of free foodgrains from December 2021 to March 2022 (i.e. Phase-V).

During 2022-23, the scheme had been extended for another six months i.e., till September 2022 (i.e. Phase-VI), followed by another extension for three (3) months from Oct 2022 to Dec 2022 to support the poor and vulnerable sections of society in view of forthcoming major festivals.

(b) FCI mainly stores wheat & rice after procurement for PDS operation and to maintain buffer stock in Central Pool.

The requirement of Storage capacity depends upon the level of procurement, requirement of buffer norms and PDS operations. Storage gap is assessed in the procuring States based on the highest stock levels in the last three years and in the consuming States on the basis of 4 months (6 months in case of North Eastern states and in some other states like J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep) requirement of National Food Security Act (NFSA) and Other Welfare Scheme (OWS). The storage capacity is constantly assessed and monitored. Based on gap assessment, storage capacities are created/hired.

Measures/Schemes to augment storage capacity as follows:-

- 1. Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) Scheme**
- 2. Central Sector Scheme (CSS)**
- 3. Construction of Silo's under PPP mode**
- 4. Hiring of godown from CWCs/SWCs/State Agencies**
- 5. Private Warehousing Scheme (PWS)**

(c) & (d): As per NFSA, 2013, foodgrains means rice, wheat or coarsegrains or any combination thereof conforming to such quality norms as may be determined by order by the Central Government from time to time. (There is no provision in NFSA Act, 2013 to distribute milk in economically backward regions or anywhere in the country). However, as per clause 9(9) of the TPDS(Control) Order, 2015, the State/UTs Government shall allow sale of commodities other than the foodgrains distributed under the Targeted Public Distribution System(TPDS) at the fair price shop to improve the viability of the fair price shop operations.

Further, Millets are already a part of Public Distribution System. As per guidelines for procurement, allocation, distribution and disposal of coarse grains, States are allowed to procure coarse grain (Jowar, Bajra, Maize & Ragi etc.) from farmers at Minimum Support Price (MSP) under central pool with the prior approval of Government of India. At present, major millets (Jowar, Bajra and Ragi) are distributed through Public Distribution System in the country.
