

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1623
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13TH DECEMBER, 2023

FREE RATION

†1623. DR. RAM SHANKAR KATHERIA:

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 is formulating any action plan to provide free of cost ration to the people in the coming five years;
- (b) if so, the comprehensive details thereof; and
- (c) the extra expense to be borne by the Government to provide free of cost ration to the 80 crore people of the country?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SADHVI NIRANJAN JYOTI)

(a) to (c): The Central Government, in order to remove the financial burden of the poor beneficiaries and to ensure nationwide uniformity and effective implementation of the programme for support of the poor, the Central Government had decided to provide food grains free of cost to Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH) beneficiaries, beginning from 1st January 2023 under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).

Keeping in view welfare of the beneficiaries of PMGKAY in terms of accessibility, affordability and availability of food grains for the poor and to maintain uniformity across the States, the Government has decided to continue to provide free food grains to about 81.35 crore beneficiaries (i.e. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH) beneficiaries) under the PMGKAY for a period of five years with effect from 1st January, 2024, with an estimated financial outlay of Rs. 11.80 lakh crore totally to be borne by Central Government.

The provision of free food grains under PMGKAY for five years with effect from 1st January 2024 reflects the long-term commitment and vision of the Government for addressing National food and nutrition security. Provision of free food grains shall mitigate any financial hardship of the affected strata of society in a sustainable manner and ensure long term pricing strategy with zero cost to the beneficiaries which is vital for effective penetration of the Public Distribution System.
