

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6277
ANSWERED ON:04.05.2010
REVISING NORMS FOR RATION CARDS
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Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to review and revamp Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)/Antyodaya Anna Yojana, change norms for issuance of ration cards and the prices of goods supplied through TPDS; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): For allocation of foodgrains (wheat & rice) to States/Union Territories(UTs) under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Department of Food & Public Distribution uses the number of Below Poverty Line(BPL) families based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and the population estimates of the Registrar General of India as on 1st March 2000 or the number of such families actually identified and ration cards issued to them by the State/UT Governments, whichever is less. As per these estimates, the number of BPL families is 6.52 crore, which includes 2.43 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Government of India makes allocations of foodgrains to States/ UTs to these 6.52 crore BPL families @ 35 kg per family per month at highly subsidized prices.

Ministry of Rural Development issues guidelines for identification of BPL families in rural areas. To formulate guidelines for conducting the next BPL census in rural areas, Ministry of Rural Development constituted an Expert Group to suggest suitable methodology. The Expert Group has submitted its report in August, 2009, which is under examination with Ministry of Rural Development.

As per Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001, the responsibility for issuance of ration cards to eligible beneficiaries under TPDS lies with the State/UT Governments.

To improve functioning of TPDS, State & UT Governments have been requested to:

- (i) review lists of BPL and AAY families and ensure timely availability of foodgrains at fair price shops;
- (ii) ensure greater transparency in functioning of TPDS;
- (iii) improve monitoring and vigilance at various levels; and
- (iv) introduce new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operations at various levels and smart-card-based delivery of essential commodities.

The proposed National Food Security law which, inter-alia, envisages entitling every family below the poverty line to a certain quantity of foodgrains each month at subsidized prices, would also bring about broader systemic reforms in the Public Distribution System.