

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:231
ANSWERED ON:27.07.2010
ERADICATION OF HUNGER
Thakur Shri Anurag Singh

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the current Public Distribution System has failed in its objectives to eradicate hunger;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to introduce a new Food Security Act, with a view to achieve zero hunger;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be introduced;
- (e) whether the Government has formulated any road map to adopt traditional system of distribution to achieve the said target; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

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) to (f): Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), in operation since 1997, is focused on the poor. Under it, at present allocations of foodgrains are made in respect of 6.52 crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, including 2.43 crore families under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme. TPDS is operated under joint responsibility of the Central and State Governments, with the Centre being responsible for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocations to the State Governments. The operational responsibility including allocation within State, identification of families below the poverty line, issue of Ration Cards and supervision of the functioning of Fair Price Shops, rest with the State Governments.

Various evaluation studies got done by the Department have pointed to certain shortcomings in the TPDS. Based on the findings of these studies and other reports, Government has issued instructions to streamline and strengthen the functioning of the TPDS. To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has taken up computerization of TPDS operations, tracking of vehicles transporting PDS commodities to prevent diversion and leakages, greater community participation in monitoring, publicity campaigns for increasing public awareness, use of technology-based applications such as Smart Cards, web-based monitoring system, SMS alerts among others.

The proposed National Food Security Act (NFSA) envisages entitling every Below Poverty Line (BPL) family to a certain quantity of foodgrains per month at subsidized prices. The proposed law will also be used to bring about broader systemic reforms in the public distribution system (PDS). The details of the proposed legislation are currently under consideration of an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) constituted for the purpose. Based on directions of the EGoM and after obtaining due approvals, the draft National Food Security Bill will be drawn up in consultation with the Ministry of Law and placed on the web site of the Department of Food and Public Distribution for public scrutiny and comments.