

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:351
ANSWERED ON:07.07.2009
MONITORING OF PDS
Mahtab Shri Bhartruhari

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

- (a) whether the Government is monitoring the Public Distribution System (PDS) through its own officers in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of the mechanism and the nature of the duties performed by these officers;
- (c) whether the Government has received any recommendations in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the effective steps taken thereon?

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): Yes, Madam.

(b),(c)&(d): Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is implemented jointly by Central Government and State/UT Governments, with sharing of responsibilities in this regard.

For better coordination between Central Government and State/UT Governments for implementing TPDS and other schemes, an arrangement of field visits by senior officers of the Department of Food & Public Distribution was introduced in 2000. These officers are termed as Area Officers. They are allotted States and UTs to visit and make assessment about functioning of TPDS and other schemes by visiting Fair Price Shops, FCI Depots and meeting beneficiaries of such schemes. The duties to be performed by these officers are given in Annex-I.

Reports of the Area Officers are forwarded to the concerned State Government/UT Administration for taking appropriate action on the findings/recommendations contained therein. Findings/ recommendations of the Area Officers' visits during 2008-09 are given in Annex-II.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (b) TO (d) OF THE UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.351 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 07.07.2009 IN THE LOK SABHA.

Duties and responsibilities of the Area Officers:

- (i) The Area Officers shall visit their allocated States/UTs at least once in a quarter for inspecting TPDS functioning.
- (ii) Each Area Officer, during the inspection in the allotted State would inspect TPDS operations in one/two districts in the State. For surprise nature of their inspection and its objective, all Area Officers should select a minimum of two village Panchayats in each of the Districts on random basis. Assessment of the functioning of TPDS in the State be made by inspecting Fair Price Shops, FCI Depots, State Government Department godowns issuing foodgrains to FPS, and as well as interacting with TPDS ration card holding families.
- (iii) The Area Officer would select such areas, having population belonging to SC, ST and very poor category.
- (iv) The Area Officers shall review functioning of TPDS as per the questionnaire/check list available given to them.
- (v) The Area Officers are expected to make an in-depth study on the functioning of TPDS in the area considering the actual situation prevailing in the area and submit an analytical report. In order to assess extent of diversion / leakage and price being charged, officer would first interview AAY/BPL/APL beneficiary on random basis about receipt of foodgrains and prices charged and crosscheck the same with State register maintained with FPSs.
- (vi) Area Officer may collect information from various divisions in the Department on the important issues pending with the State Food Secretary of concerned State and take up the issue with the Food Secretary.
- (vii) During meeting with State \ UT Government representatives, the Area Officer shall disseminate the important decisions taken by the central government and concern of the Department of F&PD with the functioning of TPDS.

(viii) The Area Officers shall submit their inspection reports within fortnight of inspection to the Department.