

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1567

ANSWERED ON:03.08.2010

IDENTIFICATION OF BPL FAMILIES

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

- (a) whether the States have issued Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards much in excess of the number of BPL families identified/approved by the Union Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor alongwith the steps taken in this regard including finalising the actual number of BPL families, detection and elimination of bogus cards etc.;
- (c) whether the Union Government has directed the States to undertake fresh identification of BPL families on the basis of 2011 census;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the States thereto;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to replace the present Public Distribution System with a more transparent, efficient and effective system; and
- (f) if so, the details and features 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) is implemented jointly by Central Government and State/Union Territory (UT) Governments with sharing of responsibilities in this regard. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of foodgrains to the States and UTs. The responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within State/UT, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families based on estimates of Planning Commission, issuance of ration cards to them and distribution of allocated foodgrains to eligible ration card holders through fair price shops (FPSs) and supervision of the functioning of FPSs, etc., rest with the State/UT Governments.

Planning Commission is the nodal agency of the Government of India for estimating poverty at National and State levels. For allocation of foodgrains (wheat and rice) to States and UTs under TPDS, Department of Food & Public Distribution uses the number of 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 AAY families.

However, as reported by 30.06.2010, the State/UT Governments have issued 11.04 crore BPL cards which includes 2.43 crore AAY cards.

The higher number of BPL ration cards issued by them is due to improper targeting of the poor households, and have inclusion as well as exclusion errors. As a result of implementation of nine-point action plan, 23 State/UT Governments have reported by 30.6.2010, deletion of 174.10 lakh bogus/ineligible ration cards

Guidelines for identification of BPL families in rural areas were issued by Ministry of Rural Development in 2002. For formulating guidelines for next BPL census in rural areas, Ministry of Rural Development constituted an Expert Group which has submitted its report in August, 2009 and the same is to be finalized by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has been regularly requesting State/UT Governments for continuous review of lists of BPL and AAY families; ensuring timely availability of foodgrains at fair price shops; ensuring greater transparency in functioning of TPDS; improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels; and introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operations at various levels.

In the Conference of Food Secretaries of States and UTs held on 12th and 13th July 2010, various resolutions were adopted to further strengthen and streamline TPDS.

