

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2142

ANSWERED ON:23.11.2010

UNIVERSAL PDS

Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba; Dharmshi Shri Babar Gajanan; Singh Shri Dushyant

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

(a) whether some State Governments have requested the Union Government to make the Public Distribution System (PDS) universal in the Left Wing extremists affected districts and include all the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste families living in tribal areas under it to do away with errors of exclusion;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by the Union Government in this regard?

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 (c): Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was launched in 1997 with a focus on the poor. Under the TPDS, foodgrains @ 35 kg. per family per month are allocated to States/Union Territories (UTs) for 6.52 crore accepted number of Below Poverty Line (BPL)/Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families for distribution at highly subsidized prices through Fair Price Shops (FPSs). Depending upon the availability of foodgrains in the central pool and past offtake, foodgrains are also allocated to Above Poverty Line (APL) families. Presently, the allocations for APL category range between 15 kg and 35 kg per family per month.

Government is thus allocating subsidized foodgrains to the accepted number of BPL/AAY families in rural and urban areas of the country including Left Wing extremists affected districts and Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste families in tribal areas under these districts.

Though there have been requests for universal PDS, Government is not considering to introduce Universal Public Distribution System as the focus on poor will get diluted. It would require procurement of huge quantities of wheat and rice which would result in less availability of foodgrains in the market, leading to rise in open market prices. If the same quantity of foodgrains is distributed equally among all, then the scale of issue will have to be reduced. Further, in order to manage the level of food subsidy, the issue prices of rice and wheat may have to be increased substantially from the present Central Issue Prices (CIPs) which have not been revised during the last eight to ten years. This may result in Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families getting reduced scale of foodgrains and paying higher prices.