

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
PLANNING  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4682

ANSWERED ON:08.12.2010

IDENTIFICATION OF BPL FAMILIES

Basavaraj Shri Gangasandra Siddappa;Mani Shri Jose K.

**Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Supreme Court has recently questioned the norms and methods adopted by the Centre in identifying BPL families while hearing a petition on inadequate supply of foodgrains to the poor;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has estimated the number of BPL families including Anthyodaya Anna Yojana families at 652 lakh based on 2000 population estimates;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether there have been divergent findings on BPL populations with the Center working out it at 27% whereas Justice Wadhwa Committee has put it at 36%;
- (f) if so, whether the Government will ensure a real estimation of BPL families well before the proposed roll out of National Food Security Act; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof;

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, PERSONNEL PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSION (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY)

(a) to (g): While hearing the petition on inadequate supply of foodgrains, Hon'ble Supreme Court has expressed the need for enhanced allocation of foodgrains for BPL families and limiting the allocation for APL families. Similar concerns have also been expressed by the Central Vigilance Committee on Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) headed by Justice D P Wadhwa, set up by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

The Planning Commission is the nodal agency in the Government of India for estimation of the number and proportion of people living below the poverty line. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution as well as the State Governments have the nodal responsibility for operating the TPDS in the country. The allocation of foodgrains to States/ Union Territories under TPDS are made by the Government of India on the basis of 1993-94 poverty estimates of the Planning Commission (i.e. 36.0%) applied to the projected population of March 2000 of the Registrar General of India. Accordingly, allocation of foodgrains are made to 6.52 crore BPL families including 2.43 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana families.

The Planning Commission had set up an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof Suresh D Tendulkar to review the alternate concepts of poverty and to recommend changes in the existing procedures used for the official estimates of poverty. The Tendulkar Committee has submitted its report in December 2009 and as per its recommendations, the all-India rural poverty headcount ratio for 2004-05 is estimated at 41.8%, urban poverty headcount ratio at 25.7% and All India level at 37.2%. The Planning Commission has accepted the poverty lines recommended by the Tendulkar Committee for 2004-05.

While the Planning Commission estimates the number and proportion of persons living below the poverty line, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) conducts the BPL Census through State Governments/ UT Administrations to identify the BPL households in the rural areas. The MoRD had constituted an Expert Group headed by Dr N C Saxena to review the methodology for conducting the BPL Census and identify the BPL households in the rural areas. The Expert Group has submitted its report in August 2009 and based on the recommendations, MoRD is in the process of finalizing the methodology for conducting the next BPL Census. As regards urban areas, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) is the nodal Ministry which issues general guidelines for identification of BPL families. However, there has not been a uniform methodology followed by the States for identification of BPL households in urban areas. An Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof S R Hashim has been constituted by the Planning Commission for recommending a suitable methodology for identification of BPL families in the urban areas so that a uniform criterion is followed.

As announced by the President in her address to the joint session of Parliament in June 2009, the Government is committed to enact a National Food Security Act (NFSA) which, inter alia, envisages entitling every family below the poverty line to a certain quantity of

food grains each month at subsidized prices. The National Advisory Council (NAC) has recently made certain recommendations with regard to proposed National Food Security Bill and the Prime Minister's Office has set up a Committee in November 2010 under the Chairmanship of Dr. C Rangarajan to examine the recommendations of NAC and suggest the criteria for identification of priority and general category population for revised entitlements of foodgrains under the proposed law.