

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2016

ANSWERED ON:08.03.2011

IT IN PDS

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to encourage use of computers/ Information Technology (IT) in Public Distribution System (PDS) to improve its efficiency and check leakages;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether a system of issuing food coupons/smart cards/Biometric cards for disbursement of foodgrains has been introduced in some States;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the benefits accrued therefrom;
- (e) whether the Union Government has impressed upon the remaining States to run similar schemes for disbursing foodgrains; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the allocation made to assist States in implementation of the said scheme?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) to (f): Government of India has approved implementation of the scheme of Computerisation of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) operations in phased manner to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the TPDS. In the first phase, the scheme has been approved to be implemented on pilot basis in three districts each of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Delhi with the outlay of Rs. 53.47 crore.

A Task Force headed by Director General, National Informatics Centre, set up on 9.8.2010, has submitted its report on Computerisation of the Public Distribution System. The recommendations of the Task Force have been accepted by the Government. As per the recommendations of the Task Force, a Common Application Software will be developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and rolled out in the pilot States. After assessment of the project on Computerization of TPDS operations, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for remaining States/UTs shall be taken up.

To improve quality of delivery of services under TPDS and to assess reliability of new technologies, a pilot scheme on Smart Card based delivery of essential commodities was approved for Chandigarh UT and Haryana with an outlay of Rs.142.29 crore. Implementing agencies for this scheme are NIC, Government of Haryana and Chandigarh UT Administration. Under the scheme, existing ration cards are to be replaced by Smart Cards. These Smart Cards as well as Smart Card transaction terminals will store details of transactions of TPDS commodities issued. The delivery of essential commodities to Smart Card holder's families will be made from the fair price shops only after verification of genuineness of the smart card holder through smart card transaction terminal. Chandigarh UT Administration and Government of Haryana have completed trial run on 7th June, 2010 and 17th June, 2010 respectively.

Only a few States/Union Territories (UTs) have introduced food coupons, some only on a pilot basis. Government of Andhra Pradesh has issued Bar coded coupons for drawal of rice and kerosene under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to ensure that there is no impersonation/false accounting in distribution of essential commodities by the Fair Price Shop (FPS) dealers. Arunachal Pradesh Government has initiated coupon system on an experimental basis in Tirap District. Coupons are issued to beneficiaries at the time of issuance / renewal of ration cards. The next month's allocation is based on the coupons submitted by the FPS dealer. Jammu & Kashmir Government is issuing ration cards in a booklet form for two years containing coupons for 24 months. As reported by Government of Bihar, monthly food coupons are issued to Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families for a year and food grains are distributed to families on the basis of such coupons.

In the Conference of Food Secretaries of States and UTs held in July, 2010, various initiatives taken by States/UTs were presented by them, including use of Information Technology, food coupons, etc. Among other measures, it was resolved to give a fillip to IT based initiatives through computerisation of the TPDS and introduction of Smart Card based delivery of foodgrains to further strengthen & streamline TPDS.