

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2049

ANSWERED ON:08.03.2011

PDS THROUGH VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

Chavan Shri Harischandra Deoram;Ponnam Shri Prabhakar;Siricilla Shri Rajaiah

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to involve Panchayati Raj Institutions to streamline the Public Distribution System (PDS);
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the modalities worked out for the purpose; and
- (c) the steps taken to implement the social audit concept in PDS?

Answer

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

(a) to (c): Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of Central Government and State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains upto the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India. The operational responsibilities for lifting and distributing the allocated foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision over distribution of allocated foodgrains to eligible card holders through the Fair Price Shops (FPSs) are of the State/UT Governments.

Public Distribution System (Control) Order 2001, mandates the State/UT Governments to carry out all required action to ensure smooth functioning of TPDS.

Instructions have been issued to State/UT Governments for involving Panchayati Raj Institutions in the functioning of the TPDS. The instructions, interalia, stipulate that the list of BPL beneficiaries should be displayed in the Fair Price Shop (FPS) as well as the office of the Gram Panchayat for public scrutiny; notices regarding entitlements of foodgrains and their prices may be pasted in the office of the Gram Panchayats, Blocks, Tehsils, etc; copy of ration card, stock and sale registers maintained may be sent to the Gram Panchayats; Gram Panchayats should be encouraged to form a FPS Committee which should include the members of the existing Vigilance Committees for the Fair Price Shops of the area under its jurisdiction as also the representatives of the TPDS groups, women and SC/ST/OBC panchayat members to keep a watch on the functioning of the FPS, etc.

As per these instructions, States where properly constituted Gram Panchayats are not in a position for some reason, the State Governments should evolve an alternative mechanism to discharge the aforesaid responsibilities of Gram Panchayats.

In the Conference of State Food Secretaries held in July 2010, it was resolved, among others, that monitoring of distribution of PDS items by FPSs may be done through social audit by local bodies/ community groups/Non-Governmental Organisations.