

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:258
ANSWERED ON:02.08.2011
CAP ON BPL BENEFICIARIES
Lal Shri Kirodi

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

- (a) whether the Union Government has directed the States to put a cap on the number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) beneficiaries covered under the Public Distribution System (PDS);
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the States thereto;
- (c) whether the quantum of foodgrains being allocated to States at present is based on the poverty estimates of the year 1993-94 of the Planning Commission;
- (d) if so, whether the Union Government has directed the States to conduct a fresh survey to ascertain the number of people living below the poverty line; and
- (e) if so, the reaction of the State Governments thereto?

Answer

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

(a) to (e): For allocation of foodgrains (wheat and rice) to States and Union Territories (UTs) under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Department of Food & Public Distribution uses the number of Below Poverty Line (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 about 2.44 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Allocation of foodgrains to these 6.52 crore accepted number of BPL families, including AAY families, are made @ 35 kg per family per month. However, the State/UT Governments have reported (upto 30.6.2011) issue of 10.76 crore ration cards for BPL families, including about 2.44 crore AAY families. 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 reported by the Ministry of Rural Development, the methodology for conducting the Socio Economic and Caste Census in rural area has been approved by the Union Cabinet with the modification that:

- (i) The Ministry of Rural Development further discuss the criteria for inclusion/exclusion with the Dr. N.C. Saxena Committee and
- (ii) Census be completed by December, 2011.

Ministry of Rural Development has also reported that the Socio Economic and Caste Census has been formally launched on 29.6.2011 in the State of Tripura. This will be followed in other States/UTs in a phased manner taking into consideration their preparedness and other relevant considerations. The census is targeted to be completed by December, 2011.

For urban areas, the Planning Commission had set up an Expert Group headed by Prof. S.R. Hashim to recommend the detailed methodology for identification of families living below poverty line in the urban areas.

As reported by Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, the above Expert Group has submitted its interim report. Union Cabinet has approved the following proposals from Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation with the modification that the proposed BPL census be completed by December 2011:

- (i) Approval of the approach recommended in the Interim Report of the Hashim Expert Group on identification of the urban poor areas for the 12th Five Year Plan period; and the Survey Questionnaire devised for conducting the BPL survey; and
- (ii) Approval to conduct the Below Poverty Line (BPL) survey in urban areas along with the proposed caste enumeration and rural BPL survey with the assistance of the Registrar General of India (RGI) as per the approach proposed above.