

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1485

ANSWERED ON:09.08.2011

BENEFICIARIES UNDER PDS

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

- (a) the number of persons identified as Below Poverty Line (BPL) and the number out of the above covered under the Public Distribution System, State-wise;
- (b) whether there is a variation in the number of BPL families identified by the Union and the State Governments;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to remove this anomaly; and
- (d) the steps taken to ensure that the ensuing survey for BPL identification is fair and transparent?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (d): 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.

For allocation of foodgrains to States and UTs under TPDS, Department of Food and Public Distribution uses the number of BPL families based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and population estimates of Registrar General of India as on 1st March, 2000 or the number of such families actually identified and ration cards issued to them, whichever is less. The total estimated number of BPL including Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families is 6.52 crore. However, as reported upto June 2011, State and UT Governments have issued 10.76 crore ration cards, which includes about 2.44 crore AAY cards. A statement showing State-wise estimated number of BPL families and BPL/AAY cards issued by the State/UT Governments is at Annexure - I. The variation in the number of BPL families accepted by Central Government for allocations and ration cards issued by State Governments is to a large extent due to the exclusion and inclusion errors in identifying the BPL families.

To streamline the functioning of TPDS, in consultation with the State/ UT Governments, a Nine-Point Action Plan was evolved in 2006, which inter-alia includes continuous review of Below Poverty Line (BPL)/ Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) lists and to eliminate bogus/ineligible ration cards. Instructions have been issued to all States/UTs to review the existing lists of BPL and AAY families and ration cards issued to them by verifying/cross checking details of each of such families and the units in the ration cards to eliminate the ineligible/bogus ration cards. Instructions have also been issued to all State/UT Governments to issue warning to the bogus card holders, through advertisements in the news papers, to surrender the bogus ration cards. As a result of these measures, States/UTs have reported deletion of 209.55 lakh bogus/ineligible cards up to 30.6.2011.

Guidelines for the identification of BPL households in rural areas are issued by Ministry of Rural Development. The guidelines finalized by the Ministry of Rural Development for Socio-Economic and Caste Census in rural areas prescribe exclusion and inclusion criteria (subject to exclusion criteria). The remaining households (subject to exclusion criteria and compulsory exclusion) will then be assigned deprivation scores depending on the number of deprivation indicators they satisfy.

Further, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation has reported that the 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 has submitted its interim report, which contained methodology to be followed for collection of socio-economic data. The Expert Group has recommended that the poverty be identified in urban areas through the identification of specific 'vulnerabilities' covering three broad categories, namely, residential, occupational and social vulnerabilities.

Government has launched the conduct of combined rural-urban Socio- economic and Caste Census in the country. The Census would be carried out by the respective State Governments with the financial and technical support of the Government. The Census is targeted to be completed by December 2011.