

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2522

ANSWERED ON:16.08.2011

VARIATION IN BPL FIGURES

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

- (a) whether the Below Poverty Line figure of 36% available with the Union Government was reportedly much lower than those projected by almost all the States;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to undertake verification of the said figures; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the State Government thereto?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (d): Planning Commission is the nodal agency of the Government of India for estimating poverty at National and State levels. 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 Registrar General of India as on 1st March 2000 or the number of such families actually identified and ration cards issued to them by State/UT Governments, whichever is less. As per 1993-94 poverty estimates, the percentage of population living Below Poverty Line at all India level is 36%. As per these estimates, the number of BPL families is 6.52 crore, which includes about 2.44 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. However, as reported by the end of June, 2011, the State/UT Governments have issued 10.76 crore BPL (including AAY) ration cards. The variation in the number of BPL families accepted by the 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. Requests have been received from some State/UT Governments for increasing the accepted number of BPL families under TPDS. However, as Government of India has been adopting uniform criteria across all States/UTs, the requests from these States/UTs for increasing the accepted number of BPL families could not be agreed to.

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.