

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:121

ANSWERED ON:22.11.2011

SUPPLY OF POOR QUALITY FOODGRAINS

Jakhar Shri Badri Ram ;Meghwal Shri Arjun Ram ;Patil Shri A.T. Nana

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

(a) whether complaints have been received regarding supply of discoloured, rotten and pest and fungus infested foodgrains for supply under Public Distribution System (PDS)/Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other food based welfare schemes including mid day meal scheme thus compromising the health and well being of poor people and students;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years alongwith the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the action taken against those held responsible for damage to foodgrains and their supply to the States; and

(d) the remedial steps taken to ensure supply of good quality foodgrains under the said schemes?

Answer

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

(a), (b) & (c): Some complaints have been received in the Department of Food & Public Distribution about poor quality of wheat and rice issued for supply under Public Distribution System (PDS) / Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other Welfare Schemes in the last three years including the current year, details of which are given at Annexure.

Ministry of Women and Child Development which is operating wheat based nutrition programme under Integrated Child Development Scheme has also reported that they have received complaints during the last three years from the States of Orissa and Goa regarding supply of poor quality foodgrains under the Schemes. The Department has asked Food Corporation of India (FCI) to issue necessary instructions to all regional offices for ensuring good quality of foodgrains under the ICDS Scheme. The Department of Food & Public Distribution has also reiterated to FCI the importance of ensuring good quality in respect of all these Welfare Schemes. Regarding the case of Goa, the Area Manager, Goa has informed that the stocks were issued under joint inspection to the representatives of Government of Goa and they had not made any complaint and had also signed the consignees report about being satisfied with the quality of the stocks issued. Regarding the case of Orissa, FCI has informed that only Fair Average Quality stocks were issued and certificate obtained from the State Government's representatives regarding their satisfaction with the quality of stocks lifted by them.

Ministry of Human Resource Development which operates the Scheme of Mid Day Meal has informed that instances of poor quality of foodgrains being received in various schools in some States had come to their notice during the years 2010 and 2011 when they were conducting a study through "joint review meetings" for checking the implementation of Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme in these States. They had brought this to the notice of Department of Food and Civil Supplies in these State Governments as well as FCI in their debriefing sessions. Thereafter it was reiterated to the concerned State Government officials as well as District MDM authorities and FCI officials that joint inspection should be conducted as per the laid down procedure to ensure that foodgrains being lifted are of Fair Average Quality.

In the aforesaid case also the Department of Food & Public Distribution has written to FCI to be extremely vigilant about the quality of foodgrains supplied under MDM as it concerns the health of children. Regarding the case of West Bengal, FCI has already investigated the matter and has reported that only FAQ stocks were issued under MDM schemes in various districts of West Bengal like Kolkata, Burdwan, Malda, Murshidabad and Hooghli, etc. However, they have assured that they have reiterated the compliance of existing instructions to various regional and district offices all over the country for ensuring good supply of foodgrains under the MDM scheme.

(d): In order to ensure that only good quality foodgrains free from insect infestation are issued for public distribution system (PDS) as well as all other food based welfare schemes, following procedures has been laid down and instructions issued from time to time to State Governments/FCI :-

(i) Only good quality foodgrains free from insect infestation and conforming to PFA Standards are to be issued under TPDS.

(ii) Ample opportunities are to be provided to the State Government to check the quality of foodgrains prior to lifting the foodgrains stocks from FCI godowns.

(iii) Samples of foodgrains are to be collected and sealed from the stocks of foodgrains to be issued under the TPDS jointly by FCI

and State Food & Civil Supplies Department.

(iv) An officer not below the rank of Inspector is to be deputed from State Government to take the delivery of foodgrains stocks from FCI godowns.

(v) Regular inspection to check the quality of foodgrains is to be carried out by the officers of State Government and surprise checks are carried out by the officers of Quality Control Cell of the Ministry.

(vi) It is the responsibility of the concerned State Government/ UT Administration to ensure that during transportation and storage at different stages in the distribution chain, the foodgrains retain the required quality specifications.

(vii) The State Government, where the decentralized procurement is in operation, should ensure that the quality of foodgrains issued under TPDS and other welfare schemes meet the desired standards under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act.