

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
PLANNING  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4527

ANSWERED ON:21.12.2011

PROCEDURE TO IDENTIFY POOR

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**Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the government has carried out any changes in the system and procedure to identify the poor with a view to eradicating poverty;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether any assessment has been undertaken to review the present norms for identifying the poor; and
- (e) if so, the outcome thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND EARTH SCIENCES (DR. ASHWANI KUMAR)

(a) to (e): The Planning Commission as the nodal agency for estimation of poverty at the national and state level reviews the methodology for estimation of poverty from time to time. Accordingly, the Planning Commission constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. Suresh D. Tendulkar in December, 2005 which submitted its report in December, 2009. The Planning Commission had accepted the poverty ratios and the poverty lines computed by this Committee for the year 2004-05 and 1993-94. The poverty line at June, 2011 price level was placed provisionally at Rs. 965 per capita per month in urban areas and Rs. 781 per capita per month for rural areas in terms of consumption expenditure and not per person earning. For a family of five, the provisional poverty line would amount to Rs. 4824 per month in urban areas and Rs. 3905 per month in rural areas and these poverty lines would vary from state to state because of price differentials.

The Below Poverty Line (BPL) Census is conducted every five years at the beginning of the Five Year Plans by the States/ Union Territories (UTs) with the technical and financial support of the Ministry of Rural Development to identify poor households in the rural areas to be targeted under various government schemes and programmes. The last BPL Census was conducted in 2002. Presently, Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC), 2011 based on the recommendations of the Saxena Committee for rural and Hashim Committee for urban areas, input generated through the Socio Economic Pilot Survey and interactions with Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders is underway to collect information on a number of socio economic indicators and expected to be completed by January, 2012.

Earlier, the caps fixed by the Planning Commission arising out of the poverty ratios used to apply as a ceiling on the number of households to be included in the BPL category in the state. Taking a holistic view of deprivation at the micro household level and their alleged mismatch with caps set after Poverty estimation, both have been decoupled now. A holistic approach to poverty estimates would be taken keeping in view the various indicators of poverty accepted by the experts.

Recently, in their Joint Statement issued on 3rd October, 2011, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and Union Minister of Rural Development clarified that the Government of India will take into account multiple dimensions of deprivation based on the indicators that are being collected through the SECC, 2011 for arriving a specific entitlements that rural households will receive under various central government programmes and schemes. The present state-wise poverty estimates using the Planning Commission methodology will not be used to impose any ceilings on the number of households to be included in different government programmes and schemes. The eligibility and entitlements of households in the country for different central government programmes and schemes will be determined after the SECC, 2011 survey results are available and have been analysed. The Union Ministry of Rural Development and the Planning Commission will consult with states, experts and civil society organizations to arrive at a consensus on the methodology by the time the SECC, 2011 is completed. This methodology will seek to ensure that no poor or deprived household will be excluded from coverage under different government programmes and schemes.