

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1070
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2012
COMMITTEE ON BPL CARDS
Singh Kunwar Rewati Raman

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

- (a) whether the Government has constituted several committees with regard to issuance of Below Poverty Line Cards;
- (b) whether these committees have given different recommendations; and
- (c) if so, the limit fixed/proposed to be fixed on the number of BPL card holders under the Public Distribution System?

Answer

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

(a)to(c): Adopting the methodology used by Expert Group set up by Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Late Prof. Lakdawala, the population living Below Poverty Line during 1993-94 as per Planning Commission's estimates at all India level is 36%. For allocation of foodgrains (wheat and rice) to States and Union Territories (UTs) under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Department of Food and 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 these estimates, the number of BPL families is 6.52 crore, which includes about 243.250 lakh Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families.

Planning Commission is the nodal agency of Government of India for estimating poverty at National and State levels. Planning Commission constituted an Expert Group to review the methodology of estimation of poverty under the Chairmanship of Prof. Suresh D. Tendulkar. The Expert Group submitted its report in December, 2009. As per Planning Commission, the Expert Group has, inter-alia, estimated all-India rural poverty headcount ratio for 2004-05 at 41.8%, urban poverty headcount ratio at 25.7% and All India level at 37.2%.

Ministry of Rural Development provides financial and technical support to States/UTs for conducting the BPL Census to identify the rural households living Below the Poverty Line who could be assisted under various programmes. Ministry of Rural Development constituted an Expert Group in August, 2008 to suggest methodology for conducting the BPL census in rural areas. The terms of reference of the Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. N.C. Saxena to advise the Ministry of Rural Development on the methodology for conducting the BPL Census for the 11th Five Year Plan did not include estimation of poverty. The Expert Group submitted its Report in August, 2009. The Group has inter-alia recommended that the percentage of people entitled to BPL status should be revised upwards to at least 50%.

Further, Ministry of Rural Development has requested all States/UTs to conduct a Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC - 2011) for collection of Socio-Economic and Caste data of households in the rural and urban areas of the country.

Government of India will take into account multiple dimensions of deprivation based on data collected in SECC - 2011 for arriving at specific entitlements that rural households will receive under various central government programmes and schemes after the SECC - 2011 survey results are available and analyzed. Ministry of Rural Development and Planning Commission will consult with States, experts and civil society organizations to arrive at a consensus on the methodology which would seek to ensure that no poor or deprived household is excluded from coverage under different government programmes and schemes.