

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:7568
ANSWERED ON:22.05.2012
PDS UNDER PANCHAYATS
Singh Shri Radhey Mohan

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to hand over the operation of the Public Distribution System (PDS) to village panchayats;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;
- (c) whether the Union Government has sought the views of the States in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the response of the States including Uttar Pradesh thereto?

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 wherein 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) belong to the State/UT Governments.

As part of the Nine Point Action Plan evolved in consultation with States/UTs in July 2006, with a view to ensure transparency, they were requested to involve Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) members in distribution of foodgrains. They were also requested to issue licences for FPSs to Gram Panchayats, Self-help groups, Cooperatives, etc. As reported by States/UTs upto 31.3.2012, out of total of 5,06,966 FPSs in the country, 1,31,561 FPSs are being run by such institutions including Gram Panchayats. In the State of Uttar Pradesh, out of 73004 FPSs, 2326 FPS are being run by Cooperatives.

Instructions have also been issued stipulating, inter-alia, that the list of BPL beneficiaries should be displayed in the FPS as well as the office of the Gram Panchayat for public scrutiny; notices regarding entitlements of foodgrains and their prices may be pasted in the office of the Gram Panchayats, Blocks, Tehsils, etc; copy of ration card, stock and sale registers maintained may be sent to the Gram Panchayats; Gram Panchayats should be encouraged to form a FPS Committee which should include the members of the existing Vigilance Committees for the FPSs of the area under its jurisdiction as also the representatives of the TPDS groups, women and SC/ST/OBC panchayat members to keep a watch on the functioning of the FPS, etc.

As per these instructions, States where properly constituted Gram Panchayats are not in a position for some reason, the State Governments have been asked to evolve an alternative mechanism to discharge the aforesaid responsibilities of Gram Panchayats.

But there is no proposal with the Government to hand over the entire operation of PDS to Village Panchayats and no views have therefore been sought from any States/UTs including Uttar Pradesh.