

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6275
ANSWERED ON:15.05.2012
IMPROVEMENT OF PDS
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Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has received suggestions from various quarters to improve the functioning of the Public Distribution System (PDS) to check damage to foodgrains and rise in prices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto alongwith the plan formulated for improving the functioning of PDS;
- (c) whether the Union Government has issued any instructions to the States for effective impiementation of PDS;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the States thereto;
- (e) whether the Government has formulated any alternative mode for distribution of foodgrains to ensure better implementation of the proposed food laws; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) and (b): Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of Central Government and State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains upto the designated depots of Food Corporation of India. 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) are of the State/UT Governments.

Suggestions are received from time to time to improve the functioning of TPDS. Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has been regularly requesting State/UT Governments for continuous review of lists of BPL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families, ensuring timely availability of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops (FPSs), ensuring greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels and introduction of new technologies such as Computerisation of TPDS operations at various levels.

(c) and (d): Government issues instructions and advisories to States/UTs for reforms in TPDS. This Department has also been regularly interacting with the States for successful and effective reforms of the TPDS. In the conference of State Food Secretaries & other officials on Best Practices and Reforms in TPDS held in July, 2010, measures being taken by States/UTs for streamlining the TPDS were shared amongst the participants. These, inter-alia, related to proper identification of beneficiaries, timely distribution of foodgrains, door step delivery of foodgrains, enhancing viability of Fair Price Shops (FPSs), enhancing storage capacities, use of technology based initiatives in TPDS, increasing public awareness, monitoring distribution of PDS commodities through social audit, etc. Regional Conferences were also held in February, 2011 with State/UT Food Ministers and Food Secretaries to review the implementation of TPDS. Further, a two day Conference on Targeted Public Distribution System and Storage with Food & Agriculture Ministers and Secretaries of States/UTs was held on 8th and 9th February, 2012 at New Delhi. The issues discussed in the Conference included stepping up of procurement activities, expeditious action to be taken for computerization of PDS and creation of storage capacity as well as time bound completion of existing projects.

(e) and (f): National Food Security Bill has been introduced in Lok Sabha on 22.12.2011. Under the Bill, upto 75% of the rural population (with at least 46% belonging to priority households) and upto 50% of urban population (with at least 28% belonging to priority households) are proposed to be covered under TPDS. Priority households will be entitled to receive 7 kg of foodgrains per person per month at prices not exceeding Rs.3/2/1 per kg for rice/wheat/coarsegrains. General households will be entitled to receive not less than 3 kg of foodgrains per person per month at prices not exceeding 50% of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat and coarsegrains and not exceeding 50% of derived MSP for rice. In order to enable Central and State Governments to perform the roles envisaged under the proposed legislation, provision for reforms in TPDS has also been made in the Bill.