

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6436  
ANSWERED ON:15.05.2012  
SUPREME COURT OBSERVATION ON STARVATION  
Reddy Shri Modugula Venugopala

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

- (a) whether the Supreme Court has observed that the Government has failed to check starvation and malnutrition in the country despite overflowing stocks due to the faulty foodgrains distribution system;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to introduce a new policy for foodgrains distribution; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken/proposed to be taken to rectify faults in the foodgrains distribution system and make it more responsive to the needs of the poor and to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reaches the intended beneficiaries?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (d): The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 14.05.2011 and 14.09.2011 in Writ Petition(Civil) No. 196 directed the Union of India, to reserve 5 million tons of foodgrains as a one-time measure, for distribution to the 150 poorest districts or the extremely poor and vulnerable sections of society. The Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that this Order was made to ensure that no starvation deaths may take place and people can be saved from malnutrition as far as possible. Further, the Court directed that the above 5 million tons may be allocated on the recommendations of the Committee headed by Justice (Retd.) D.P. Wadhwa. In pursuance of the above directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court and on the recommendations of the Committee, the Government has allocated a quantity of 23.69 lakh tons and 15.40 lakh tons of rice and wheat for the additional BPL and AAY families in the identified poorest districts in 27 States during 2011-12 and 2012-13 respectively. The above includes 1473 tons of foodgrains allocated in February, 2012 for one year to six districts in four States for running community kitchen to provide cooked food in places like Collectrates, City Hospitals, Bus Stops and in pockets inhabited by poor and vulnerable people In collaboration with Corporations/Public Sector Undertakings under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programme.

The Government has Introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22.12.2011, the National Food Security Bill which aims at providing legal entitlements of food grains and meals to targeted population. The Bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution for examination.

Strengthening and Streamlining of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is a continuous process. Government has been regularly reviewing the functioning of TPDS and issues advisories to State Governments/UT Administrations. They have been requested to undertake periodical review of lists of Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya Anna Yojana families, eliminate bogus/ineligible ration cards, ensure timely availability of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops (FPSs) and greater transparency in the functioning of TPDS through use of information technology, improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels. Several initiatives have been taken by the Central and State Governments for introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operations, use of bar-coded ration cards/coupons and bio metric identification of beneficiaries etc. Conferences with State Governments/Union Territory Administrations are also held from time to time for reviewing the functioning of TPDS in the States/UTs and encourage sharing of best practices in the implementation of TPDS.