

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2851

ANSWERED ON:11.12.2012

COVERAGE OF PDS

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

(a) whether the Government proposes to increase the number of beneficiaries eligible for receiving foodgrains through the Public Distribution System (PDS) taking into consideration the data of 2001 census and the recommendations made by Tendulkar and Saxena Committee;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to form a separate commission for identifying the beneficiaries under the PDS in view of the problems being faced in identification of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families;

(d) if so, the details thereof along with its proposed duties and responsibilities;

(e) whether the foodgrain stocks at the current level of procurement are adequate to meet the increased demand; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the manner in which the Government proposes to meet this shortfall?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (d) : 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 & rice) to States and Union Territories (UTs) under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Department of Food & Public Distribution uses the number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families based on the above-referred 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.

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 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%.

Ministry of Rural Development has launched a Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC 2011) on 29th June, 2011 in the country, which is being carried out by the respective State/UT Governments with financial and technical support of the Government of India. SECC 2011 consists of Census for identification of below poverty households in rural and urban areas and Caste Census throughout the country.

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 at specific entitlements under various Central government's programmes and schemes. However, as reported by Ministry of Rural Development, there is no proposal to form a separate commission for identification of BPL families at present.

(e) & (f) : Stock position of foodgrains in the Central pool as on 1.11.2012 was 695.29 lakh tons (289.54 lakh tons of rice and 405.75 lakh tons of wheat). The current level of stocks of foodgrains in the Central pool is adequate to meet the requirement of foodgrains under TPDS and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) at the existing level of allocations.