

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:108

ANSWERED ON:05.03.2013

PREVALENCE OF HUNGER

Pradhan Shri Amarnath;Ray Shri Rudramadhab

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

- (a) whether as per the report of International Food Policy Research Institute, India ranks 65th in the list of countries where hunger and malnutrition persists despite huge stocks of foodgrains maintained by the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) the policy of the Government to distribute foodgrains amongst the poor people and the mechanism put in place to monitor the same; and
- (d) the remedial steps taken or being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a), (b), (c) & (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO.108 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 05.03.2013 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a) & (b) According to 2012 report of Global Hunger Index (GHI), published by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), India's rank was calculated as 65 out of 120 countries. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is based on three equal weight indicators namely (i) Under nourishment: the proportion of under nourished people as a percentage of population, (ii) Child underweight: reflected by the proportion of the children under age of five who are under weight, (iii) Child mortality: reflected by the mortality rate of children under the age of five. It is clear from the components of GHI that it is indicative of under nourishment and not hunger and that also specially in children under the age of five. The index does not reflect the number of hungry or lack of availability of food or access to food to the people in the country. As such, it is not a proper index for reflecting the situation of Indian food security and cannot be even used to compare the same with rest of the countries. Furthermore, the findings in the study are neither test checked nor validated by any large scale primary field surveys in the country.

To address the issue, the Government has been providing food grains at highly subsidized prices to the targeted population through State Governments/Union Territory Administrations under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) such as Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, Annapurna, Emergency Feeding Programme, etc. During 2012-13, taking into consideration the foodgrains available in the Central Pool, the Government has so far allocated a quantity of 578.41 lakh tons of food grains to States/UTs under TPDS. This includes additional allocation of 50 lakh tons of foodgrains made for the BPL families at BPL issue prices and 21.21 lakh tons of additional allocation for distribution in the poorest districts as per order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and 7.77 lakh tons of food grains allocated for the calamity relief, festivals etc. In addition, 49.26 lakh tons of foodgrains have also been allocated to States/UTs under Other Welfare Schemes.

In addition, the Government is also implementing several schemes/programmes through State Governments/UT Administrations like National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). All these schemes/programmes have potential to address one or other aspect of Nutrition.

(c)&(d) For allocation of foodgrains (wheat and rice) to States and UTs under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Department of Food & 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 the Registrar General of India as on 1st March 2000 or the number of such families actually identified and ration cards issued to them by the State/UT Governments, whichever is less. As per these estimates, the number of BPL families is 6.52 crore, which includes about 2.43 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Allocation of foodgrains to these 6.52 crore accepted number of BPL families, including AAY families, are made @ 35 kg per family per month. Allocations of foodgrains for Above Poverty Line (APL) category are also made depending upon the availability of stocks in Central pool and past offtake. At present, these allocations range between 15 kg and 35 kg per family per month.

TPDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains up to the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India. The operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision/monitoring of functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.

A Nine Point Action Plan for curbing the leakages / diversion of foodgrains under TPDS was evolved in July, 2006 in consultation with the State/UT Governments. Government has been regularly monitoring the action being taken by States / UTs including advisories, holding conferences etc. wherein State / UT Governments are requested to implement the Nine Point Action Plan. Point-wise and State / UT-wise details of the action taken under the Nine Point Action Plan as reported by States up to 31.12.2012 are at Annex-I and II.

Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. Government has regularly reviewed and has issued instructions to States/UTs to strengthen functioning of TPDS by improving monitoring mechanism and vigilance, increased transparency in functioning of TPDS, adoption of revised Model Citizen's Charter, use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and improving the viability of Fair Price Shop operations.