

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:116

ANSWERED ON:05.03.2013

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Gangaram Shri Awale Jaywant;Mahto Shri Baidyanath Prasad

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

- (a) whether the Public Distribution System (PDS)/Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has achieved its objectives of eradication of hunger/starvation in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has introduced computerisation/digitalisation to strengthen and bring transparency in PDS in view of the reports of corruption, diversion and prevalence of fake cards in the system;
- (d) if so, the details and the current status thereof, State-wise; and
- (e) the other steps taken to strengthen PDS and create awareness about it among the beneficiaries?

Answer

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 116 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 05.03.2013 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a) & (b) Government has been allocating foodgrains (wheat, rice and coarse grains) under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) at highly subsidized prices at the rate of 35 kg per family per month to States and Union Territories (UTs) for distribution to 6.52 crore accepted number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, which includes about 2.43 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Allocation of foodgrains to about 11.52 crore Above Poverty Line (APL) families are also made at subsidized prices depending upon the availability of foodgrains in the Central pool and as per the past offtake. Presently, the allocation of foodgrains to APL families ranges between 15 and 35 kg per family per month. Government has also been making additional allocations of foodgrains to the States/UTs for distribution to the AAY, BPL and APL families from time to time, including additional BPL and AAY families in the poorest districts of the States and allocations for calamity relief. However, no specific assessment has been made by the Government regarding impact of TPDS on eradication of hunger / starvation in the country.

(c) & (d) As part of modernization of TPDS, end-to-end computerisation of TPDS has been taken up. Government has initiated a Plan Scheme for providing financial assistance to States/UTs for implementation of scheme for End-to-end Computerisation of TPDS Operations. Under the scheme, financial assistance is being provided to States/UTs for implementation of Component I, which comprises digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, computerization of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portal and grievance redressal mechanisms. The current status thereof in States/UTs is given at Annex.

(e) 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. Financial assistance is also being given to States/UTs for launch of campaigns for generating awareness amongst the TPDS beneficiaries about their entitlements and redressal mechanism.