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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2451
ANSWERED ON:12.03.2013
COMPUTERISATION OF PDS
Choudhary Shri Bhudeo;Ganpatrao Shri Jadhav Prataprao;Khaire Shri Chandrakant Bhaurao;Singh Baba Shri K.C.;Singh Shri Ijyaraj

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

(a) whether the Government has sought information from the States regarding initiatives taken by them to computerise the Public Distribution System (PDS) with a view to fast tracking the reforms process so as to check corruption, irregularities and diversion from PDS in a time-bound manner;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the response of the States thereto along with the progress made in this regard, till date and the time-limit fixed for its completion;

(c) whether the Government has decided to Centrally monitor the computerisation process;

(d) if so, the details and the objectives thereof and the steps taken thereon;

(e) whether the Government proposes to extend the alternative schemes like biometric technology, Radio Frequency Identification System, cash for food etc. to the entire country to bring efficiency in the functioning of the Public Distribution System; and

(f) if so, the details thereof along with the present status of the said schemes?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) : Computerization of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been taken up in consultation with States/Union Territories (UTs) with a view to ensure correct identification of beneficiaries, distribution of TPDS commodities to deserving beneficiaries, elimination of bogus /duplicate ration cards, etc. It would also enable timely availability of foodgrains at Fair Price Shop (FPS) level, check leakages/diversion of foodgrains, introduce transparency and public accountability in implementation of TPDS, etc.

Government has initiated implementation of Component-I of the scheme for End-to-end Computerisation of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) Operations, which comprises digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, computerization of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portal and grievance redressal mechanism. Details of the present status of implementation of TPDS as reported by States/UTs from time to time are annexed. As per the timelines stipulated under the scheme, digitization of beneficiary database is to be completed by March, 2013 and computerisation of supply-chain management is to be completed by October, 2013 by all States/UTs.

(c) & (d): Computerization of TPDS is being implemented as a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) by the Central Government. As per MMP guidelines, a dedicated institutional mechanism by way of an Empowered Committee (EC) and a Central Project e-Mission Team (CPeMT) for computerization of TPDS has been set up. States/UTs have also been requested to establish a two-tier structure at their level comprising a State Apex Committee as well as a State Project e-Mission Team (SPeMT). Detailed guidelines for end-to-end Computerisation of TPDS have been issued to all States/UTs. Action Plan for computerization of TPDS have also been received from all States/UTs. The application software prepared by National Informatics Centre (NIC) has been shared by it with State Information Officers (SIOs) of NIC. To ensure the implementation of Computerization of TPDS, the progress is also being reviewed in various meetings, conferences, etc.

(e) & (f): End-to-end Computerisation of TPDS inter-alia envisages use of biometric information of the beneficiaries through Aadhaar/National Population Register (NPR) for their identification for issuance of foodgrains, weeding out of bogus and ineligible ration cards/units, etc. However, use of biometric information for FPS level transactions is not covered under Component-I of the scheme. There is no specific proposal for use of Radio Frequency Identification devices, cash for food, etc. at present.