

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3964

ANSWERED ON:18.02.2014

FAILURE OF PDS

Alagiri Shri S. ;Jawale Shri Haribhau Madhav;Yadav Shri Dharmendra;Yadav Shri Om Prakash

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

(a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that PDS in its original form was widely criticized for its failure to serve the Below Poverty Line (BPL) population due to its urban bias, negligible coverage in the States with the highest concentration of the rural poor and lack of transparent and accountable arrangements for delivery that led to its failure;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to streamline the system and to fix accountability and responsibility to ensure that each poor family get their full entitlements under the scheme?

**Answer**

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

(a) and (b) The Public Distribution System (PDS) till 1992 was a general entitlement scheme for all consumers without any specific target. The Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was launched in 1992 in 1775 blocks with a view to strengthen and streamline the TPDS as well as to improve its reach in the far flung, hilly, remote and inaccessible areas where a substantial section of poor lived.

PDS, as it stood earlier, had been criticized for its failure to serve the population below the poverty line, its urban bias, limited coverage in the States with high concentration of the rural poor and lack of transparent and accountable arrangements for delivery.

In June 1997, Government launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with focus on the poor. Under the TPDS, States and Union Territories (UTs) were required to formulate and implement foolproof arrangements for identification of the poor for delivery of foodgrains and for its distribution in a transparent and accountable manner at the Fair Price Shop (FPS) level. Allocation of foodgrains (rice and wheat) are made under TPDS to States/UTs for distribution to 6.52 crore accepted number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, which includes 2.43 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Allocation of foodgrains to BPL families, including AAY families, are made @ 35 kg per family per month. Allocation of foodgrains to about 11.52 crore Above Poverty Line (APL) families are also made depending upon the availability of foodgrains in the Central pool and the past offtake. Presently, the allocation of foodgrains to APL families ranges between 15 and 35 kg per family per month.

Further, the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) has been notified on 10.09.2013. This Act inter alia provides for a coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population at the all India level under TPDS. Under the NFSA 2013, the priority households are entitled to receive foodgrains @ 5 kg per person per month at subsidized prices. The existing AAY households, however, will continue to receive 35 kg of foodgrains per household per month.

(c) The strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. In order to maintain supplies and securing availability and distribution of essential commodities, PDS (Control) Order, 2001 has been notified on 31.8.2001 which mandates the State and UT Governments to carry out all required action to ensure smooth functioning of TPDS. Under the said Order, the State and UT Governments are competent to take action against those indulging in malpractices in the TPDS by invoking provisions of clauses 8 and 9 of the said Order. An offence committed in violation of the provisions of this Order is liable for penal action under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. State/UT Governments are also required to take action under Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

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 for implementation by States/UTs.

Further, Government has been regularly issuing advisories and holding conferences wherein State/UT Governments are requested for continuous review of lists of BPL and AAY families, improving the offtake of allocated foodgrains, ensuring timely availability of foodgrains at FPSs, greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels, adoption of revised Model Citizen's Charter, improving the viability of FPS operations, etc.

Government has also taken up a Plan Scheme on End-to-end Computerisation of TPDS Operations during the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17). Under the scheme, financial assistance is being provided to States/UTs on cost sharing basis for the computerisation of

TPDS including digitization of ration card and other databases, computerisation of supply chain management, setting up of transparency portal, grievance redressal mechanisms, etc.

Further, the NFSA 2013 inter-alia contains measures for reforms in TPDS to be undertaken progressively by the Central and State Governments. These reforms include door-step delivery of foodgrains to the TPDS outlets, application of information and communication technology tools, diversification of commodities distributed under the PDS over period of time etc. Provisions for transparency and accountability in TPDS, including disclosure of records of TPDS, conduct of social audit, setting up of Vigilance Committees at the State, district, block and fair price shop levels, grievance redressal mechanism at the district and State levels have also been made in the Act.