

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6415
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2015
SAVING OF SUBSIDY
Bhamre Dr. Subhash Ramrao

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

- (a) whether some experts have expressed the view that the implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) would free up money from the Public Distribution System which could be spent on areas like nutrition, better health and education and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Scheme is likely to reduce the burden on food expenditure currently incurred by many States;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food has also praised the Scheme and has called it worth emulating by many other countries and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)

(a) to (c): The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) entitles upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population to receive food- grains at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), thus covering about two thirds of the population of the country.

Highly subsidized prices of foodgrains is likely to result in additional disposable income in the hands of the people, which can be used for other facilities including better nutrition, health and education. As foodgrains under the Act will be made available to States/Union Territories (UTs) also at the above mentioned prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains, which are significantly lower than the current Central Issue Prices for BPL and APL households, the burden of State Governments on buying TPDS foodgrains will reduce. Further, the Act also contains a provision for Central assistance to the States/UTs for meeting the expenditure incurred by them towards intra-State movement, handling of food- grains and margins paid to fair price shop dealers.

(d): No formal communication has been received in this regard. However, Ms. Hilal Elver, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, in her report dated 12.01.2014, submitted to the Human Rights Council, had inter alia stated that the National Food Security Act will amount to the largest food security pro- gramme in the world, and aims to reduce malnutrition and improve food security. It also promotes gender-based rights and social inclusion of women, and includes provision for social monitoring and complaint mechanism. The Special Rapporteur also commended Indian efforts to address chronic malnutrition.