

the specific case referred to in part (c) of the question is being looked into and information in this regard will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Release of Wheat and Rice

456. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to release sufficient wheat and rice in the open market in view of scarcity and high price of these commodities in the market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) Government has decided to release upto 40 lakh tonnes of wheat to State Governments for open sale at the rates that have been fixed separately for the four Zones in the country;

The State Governments have been given the choice to release this wheat through the PDS Outlets or through the Roller Flour Mills, Co-operative Agencies and State Government Agencies, or exercise both the options.

The issue prices of FCI for open sale of wheat are as under :-

Name of Zone	Rate per quintal (in Rs.)
North Zone	Rs. 645/-
South Zone	Rs. 716/-
West Zone	Rs. 689/-
East Zone	Rs. 708/-

Government has not yet undertaken sale of rice in the open market.

National Handicapped Welfare Fund

457. SHRI BHARTRAHARI MAHTAB : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the amount granted by the union Government under the National Handicapped Welfare Fund to Orissa during the last three years has been fully utilised;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) No funds have been sanctioned to Orissa from National Handicapped Welfare Fund during the last three financial years i.e. 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Green Cards to People Living Below Poverty Line

458. KUMARI KIM GANGTE : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the States/UTs have completed the process of issue of green cards to the people living below poverty lines;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;

(c) the details of States/UTs which have yet to complete the process; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to ensure issue of ration items regularly to the B.P.L. families?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) to (c) No specific colour is prescribed for special cards to be issued to the families below poverty line (BPL) under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) introduced in June, 1997. The States/Union Territories have either issued special cards or have made suitable endorsement in existing cards by an appropriate stamp in respect of the families identified below poverty line. The State/Union Territory-wise details of ration cards are given in the enclosed statement. Delhi and Lakshadweep have not yet launched the TPDS as the identification of poor and issue of special cards there is still to be completed.

(d) The monthly allocation of PDS commodities including the BPL quota of foodgrains is made to the States/UTs at least two months in advance to maintain regular and smooth supplies. The responsibility of further distribution within the State/Union Territory rests with the State Govt./Union Territory Administration.

Statement

State-wise Number of Ration Cards

States/UT	Ration Cards in (Lakhs)			Reported Upto
	BPL	APL	Total	
1	2	3	4	5
Andhra Pradesh*	113.02	51.53	164.55	Sept. 98
Arunachal Pradesh	0.78	2.22	30.00	June 98
Assam	19.06	22.68	41.74	Aug. 98