

**Disagreement between the Centre and States regarding
determination of poverty level**

3078. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that several State Governments have expressed their disagreement with Centre's method of estimating poverty levels and allocating foodgrains on the basis of these much lower numbers;

(b) if so, whether the State Governments have no alternative but to subsidise the foodgrains at their cost under the public distribution system; and

(c) whether there is any proposal that the States shall have no say in extending the benefits to other beneficiaries beyond those allowed by the Central Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is jointly operated with shared responsibilities by the Central and State/UT Governments. The responsibility for identification of BPL and AAY families as per Planning Commission estimates and guidelines of Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and issuance of ration cards to them, lifting of allocated foodgrains and its proper distribution to the eligible families through Fair Price Shops is of the State/UT Governments.

Under the TPDS allocation of foodgrains is made @ 35 kg. per family per month for 6.52 crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, including the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families in the country on the basis of 1993-94 poverty estimates of the Planning Commission projected on the population estimates of Registrar General of India as on 1.3.2000. As provided under PDS (Control) Order, 2001, State Governments are expected to identify BPL families as per their respective share within this ceiling limit and issue foodgrains @ 35 kg. per BPL family per month. However, State Governments have issued 10.86 crore ration cards to BPL families as against 6.52 crore BPL families accepted for allocation.

Based on 2004-05 poverty estimates and March, 2009 population estimates, number of BPL families works out to 5.91 crores in the country. However, presently, allocations of foodgrains under TPDS by Central Government are being continued for 6.52 crore BPL and AAY families.

(c) Government proposes to enact the National Food Security Act. Under the proposed law, every BPL family is to be entitled to receive 25 kg of foodgrains per month. Details of eligible BPL families to be covered, methodology for their identification, issue of targeted identification cards to them, scope for State Governments to extend benefits to non-BPL families, etc. are yet to be worked out.