

Inflation in food prices

953. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is inflation in food prices;
- (b) if so, the details of steps taken to control the same;
- (c) whether any step has been taken to strengthen the Public Distribution System to control the inflation in food prices;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has taken a number of steps to control the price rise and to soften the impact of price rise on consumers. Government measures are given in the Statement. [Refer to Statement appended to the Answer to Unstarred Question No. 940 (Par 'a')]

(c) and (d) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), focused on the poor, is operated under joint responsibility of Central and the State/UT Governments. The operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them, and supervision over and monitoring of functioning of fair price shops, rest with the concerned State and UT Governments. The Measures taken by the Government to strengthen the TPDS are given in the Statement (See below).

- (e) Does not arise.

Statement

I. Price control measures through allocations of foodgrains under TPDS to States/UTs and strengthening of the TPDS.

- **BPL/AAY allocation:** Allocations of foodgrains for BPL and AAY categories are made @ 35 kg. per family per month for all accepted 6.52 crore families in the country. The total BPL including AAY allocations made during 2009-10 have been 276.77 lakh tons comprising 181.05 lakh tons of rice and 95.72 lakh tons of wheat.
- **APL allocation:** Allocations under APL category are made depending upon the availability of stocks of foodgrains in Central Pool and past offtake. Presently, these allocations range between 10 kg and 35 kg per family per month in different States/UTs. **During 2009-10**, a quantity of 199.93 lakh tons of foodgrains have been allocated to States/UTs under APL category as against 112 lakh tons during 2008-09. This included a total quantity of 14.36 lakh tons issued at MSP based/derived price as drought relief for APL families in drought affected States from October, 2009 to March, 2010.

II. Government Measures taken for strengthening of TPDS are given below:

A number of measures have been initiated by Department of Food and Public Distribution to strengthen TPDS which include improved monitoring and vigilance, increased transparency in functioning of TPDS, use of Information and communication technology tools and efficient operation of FPS.

These measures include:

A. Measures to strengthen monitoring and vigilance

- (i) Implementation of the Nine Point Action Plan.
- (ii) Review to detect and eliminate bogus ration cards and action against those with Bogus Ration Cards.
- (iii) Greater involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

B. Increased transparency in functioning of TPDS

- (i) Adoption and implementation of revised Model Citizens' Charter to facilitate use of Right to Information Act.
- (ii) Introduction of monthly certification of delivery of foodgrains at price shops and their distribution to ration card holders.
- (iii) Publicity-cum-awareness Campaign on TPDS.
- (iv) Display of allocation of foodgrains — district and FPS wise on websites for public scrutiny.

C. Use of ICT tools

- (i) Pilot Scheme on Computerization of TPDS Operations in four States.
- (ii) Pilot Scheme on Smart Card based Operations in Haryana and Chandigarh.
- (iii) Piloting of new technologies for tracking movement of vehicles transporting TPDS Commodities.

D. Improve the efficiency of FPS operations

- (i) Doorstep delivery of foodgrains to FPS.
- (ii) Timely availability of foodgrains at FPS.
- (iii) Distribution of wheat flour/fortified wheat flour under TPDS.
- (iv) Allotment of Fair Price Shops to Institutions and Groups.
- (v) Sale of non-PDS items by FPS.
- (vi) Revision of Commission paid by State Government to FPS licensees.

III. To improve functioning of TPDS, specially during the period of drought, State/UT Governments have been directed to take up a special campaign during October-December, 2009 to verify BPL and AAY ration cardholders to detect and eliminate bogus/ineligible ration cards.