

Entitlement of foodgrains to poor

2928. SHRI SHYAMAL CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to restrict food guarantee to 25 kg. of grains for BPL households which is less than the existing entitlement;

(b) whether Government is aware that inadequate intake of food and artificial division of poor in the name of BPL-APL has created serious health problem among majority of population who are poor; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) In the address of the President to the joint session of Parliament on 04.06.2009, it was announced that under the proposed law on Food Security every Below Poverty Line (BPL) family would be entitled to 25 kg of foodgrains at subsidized prices. However, as various issues pertaining to the proposed law are still under examination, a final decision is yet to be taken.

At present, Government makes allocations of foodgrains to States / Union Territories for distribution under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) at the rate of 35 kg per family per month in respect of BPL/Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Depending upon availability of foodgrains in the Central Pool and past off-take, allocations are also made for Above Poverty Line (APL) families. Presently allocations for APL families range between 15 and 35 kg per family per month in different States. The distinction between BPL and APL is made to better target the poor so that their food intake and nutritional status get improved.

In addition, allocations are also made for various other welfare schemes such as Mid-Day Meal scheme, Wheat-based Nutrition Programme, Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls, Integrated Child Development Services scheme, etc.

Food coupons

2929. SHRI BHARATSINH PRABHATSINH PARMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a system of issuing food coupons for disbursement of foodgrains has been introduced in some States;

(b) if so, the details thereof and benefits accrued therefrom;

(c) whether Government has impressed upon the States to run similar schemes for disbursing foodgrains in the remaining States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) Only a few States/Union Territories (UTs) have introduced food coupons, some only on a pilot basis. Government of Andhra Pradesh has issued Bar coded coupons for drawal of rice and kerosene under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to ensure that there is no impersonation/false accounting in distribution of essential commodities by the Fair Price Shop (FPS) dealers. Arunachal Pradesh Government has initiated coupon system on an experimental basis in Tirap District. Coupons are issued to beneficiaries at the time of issuance/renewal of ration cards. The next month's allocation is based on the coupons submitted by the FPS dealer. Jammu & Kashmir Government is issuing ration cards in a booklet form for two years containing 24 coupons. As reported by Government of Bihar, monthly food coupons are issued to Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families for a year and food grains are distributed to families on the basis of such coupons. However, effectiveness of such coupons in eliminating deficiencies in TPDS has not yet been evaluated.

In the Conference of Food Secretaries of States and UTs held on 12th and 13th July, 2010, various initiatives taken by States/UTs were presented, including the issue of Food coupons. Among other measures, it has been resolved to give a fillip to IT based initiatives through computerization of the TPDS and introduction of Smart Card based delivery of foodgrains to further strengthen & streamline TPDS.

Shortage of sugar

2930. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: