

Entitlements under National Food Security Act

2655. SHRI PANKAJ BORA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per National Food Security Act, Government would give 35 kg. of grains per month at Rs. 3/- per kg. to every family of the country;

(b) if so, whether it will not benefit the grain traders, shopkeepers and corrupt officials; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The National Food Security Bill, 2011, introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22.12.2011, provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population, with at least 46% population belonging to priority households and upto 50% of the urban population, with at least 28% population belonging to priority households for receiving subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). Priority households will be entitled to receive 7 kg of foodgrains per person per month at prices not exceeding Rs. 3, 2, 1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains respectively. General households will be entitled to receive not less than 3 kg of foodgrains at prices not exceeding 50% of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat and coarse grains and not exceeding 50% of derived MSP for rice.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The Bill seeks to give legal entitlement to subsidised foodgrains to about two-thirds of the population and will therefore benefit a large segment of population in terms of access to foodgrains. The Bill contains elaborate provisions for grievance redressal, transparency and accountability, to ensure that prescribed benefits reach the intended target groups.

Mismanagement of Buffer Stocks

2656. SHRI PANKAJ BORA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mismanagement and carelessness in maintaining the wheat and rice buffer stocks are causing price rise;

(b) whether Government is aware that several lakh tonnes of wheat is rotting in FCI godowns being kept in the open;

(c) the reasons why Government is allowing wheat and rice rotting when people are dying of hunger in the country;

(d) whether Government has taken any steps to save foodgrains from rotting;

- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) No, Sir. There has been no mismanagement and carelessness in maintaining the wheat and rice buffer stocks as it is evident from the stock of wheat and rice being 199.52 lakh tons and 333.50 lakh tons respectively as on 1.4.2012 against the buffer norms of 70 lakh tons for wheat and 142 lakh tons for rice. As for the rise of prices of wheat and rice, these prices have been almost stable for last one year between April, 2011 and April, 2012.

(b) Food Corporation of India (FCI) has reported that a meager quantity of foodgrains accrued as damaged/non-issuable in cover and Plinth (CAP) complexes of FCI during the last three years, details are as under :-

(Figs, in tons)

Region	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Gujarat	671	137	196
Maharashtra	45	21	1346
Uttar Pradesh	00	00	15
TOTAL	716	158	1557

(c) to (e) Government is taking all precautionary measures for safe and scientific storage of foodgrains to avoid rotting of foodgrains. State Governments and Food Corporation of India have been instructed from time to time to take required measures for proper and safe storage of foodgrains in covered godowns and in CAP storage. Recently instructions to all State Governments/UTs and FCI, for steps to be taken for proper preservation and safe storage of Central pool stocks of foodgrains have been reiterated on 19.12.2011 and 11.1.2012. These measures include continuous monitoring of quality of foodgrains during procurement, storage and distribution, to follow code of practices for safe storage in covered and CAP storage, to take all precautionary measures like prophylactic and curative treatment for insect pest control, regular periodic inspection of stocks to assess the quality etc.

The following precautionary and remedial steps are mandated to be followed by F.C.I. and State Government agencies to check damages to central pool stocks of foodgrains:

- (i) All godowns are to be constructed as per specifications.
- (ii) Foodgrains are to be stored by adopting proper scientific code of storage practices.

- (iii) Adequate dunnage materials such as wooden crates, bamboo mats, polythene sheets are to be used to check migration of moisture from the floor.
- (iv) Fumigation covers, nylon ropes, nets and insecticides for control of stored grain insect pests are to be provided in all the godowns.
- (v) Prophylactic (spraying of insecticides) and curative treatments (fumigation) are to be carried out regularly and timely in godowns for the control of stored grain insect pests.
- (vi) Effective rat control measures, both in covered godowns as well as in CAP storage are to be used.
- (vii) Foodgrains in 'Cover and Plinth' (CAP) storage are to be stored on elevated plinths and wooden crates are to be used as dunnage material. Stacks are to be properly covered with specifically fabricated low-density black polythene water-proof covers and tied with nylon ropes/nets.
- (viii) Regular periodic inspections of the stocks/godowns are to be undertaken by qualified and trained staff including senior officers.
- (ix) The principle of "First in First Out" (FIFO) is to be followed to the extent possible so as to avoid longer storage of foodgrains in godowns.
- (x) Only covered rail wagons are to be used for movement of foodgrains so as to avoid damage during transit.
- (f) Does not arise.

Food Security

2657. SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether food security has assumed a crucial importance in recent times;
- (b) if so, the measures taken by Government to ensure food security; and
- (c) whether the requirement has been quantified?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Providing food security has been an area of focus of the Government's planning and policy. Government is implementing Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) under which foodgrains at subsidised prices are provided to targeted households under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) categories. Government is also implementing Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) such as Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid Day Meal, Annapurna etc. to ensure food security for specially vulnerable groups. During 2011-12, 615.26 lakh tons of foodgrains was allocated under TPDS and OWS.