

Performance of PDS

†646. SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the country has proved to be successful;
- (b) whether benefit of PDS does not reach the common man;
- (c) whether it is a fact that the food items sent for common man under PDS are being diverted to black market; and
- (d) if so, the remedial measures being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) to (d) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is an important part of Government's policy for ensuring food security in the country. Evaluation studies on the functioning of TPDS got conducted by the Department from time to time have revealed certain shortcomings/ deficiencies in the functioning of TPDS, such as inclusion/exclusion errors, leakages/ diversion of foodgrains, etc. Copies of these study reports have been forwarded to concerned States/Union Territories (UTs) for taking necessary remedial measures to remove the deficiencies noticed in the functioning of TPDS.

In an independent study conducted by a group of research scholars and student volunteers, including Mr. Jean Dreze, Reetika Khera and others (2011), it has been stated that there has been an impressive revival of PDS across the country during the recent years. The group have based their findings on a study made in 106 randomly-selected villages, spread over two districts each in 9 States. Based on the survey made in May-June, 2011, the researchers have brought out that there have been major initiatives in the recent past to improve PDS and these efforts are showing results. It has been also mentioned that the days when up to half of the PDS grain was diverted to the open market are gone.

Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. Government has regularly reviewed and has issued instructions to States/UTs to strengthen functioning of TPDS by improving monitoring mechanism and vigilance, increased transparency in functioning of TPDS, adoption of revised Model Citizen's Charter, use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and improving the viability of Fair Price Shop operations.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.