

(a) whether Government has allocated additional foodgrains at BPL rates for some identified poorest districts in some States of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the total allocation of foodgrains made by Government at BPL rates to those districts;

(c) whether Government would also consider to increase such allocation to all the poorest districts of all the States including Tamil Nadu; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) In pursuance of the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court and as per the recommendations of the Committee headed by Justice (Retd.) D.P. Wadhwa, Government has allocated 44.90 lakh tons of foodgrains at Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) central issue prices for distribution to additional BPL and AAY families in the identified poorest districts in 27 States of the country, out of which 37.75 lakh tons of foodgrains was allocated at BPL rates. This is a one-time allocation made on the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court. However during 2012-13, Government has allocated 50 lakh tons of additional foodgrains at BPL prices to the States/UTs for additional BPL families, out of which Tamil Nadu has been allocated 5.09 lakh tons of foodgrains.

Reaching of foodgrains to the needy persons

‡2213. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foodgrains being distributed in the country each year through Public Distribution System is not reaching to the needy persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the main reason behind this mismanagement is the lack of coordination between the Central and the State Governments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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

‡Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Government allocates foodgrains (rice and wheat) to States/UTs for distribution to eligible beneficiaries under TPDS. The lifting of foodgrains against the regular TPDS allocation has been around 90% since 2008-09. As regards lifting of foodgrains against the additional allocations, it has shown rising trend and has improved from 26% against the additional BPL allocation made during 2009-10 to 85% against the additional BPL allocation made during 2011-12.

In an independent study conducted by a group of research scholars and student volunteers, including Mr. Jean Dreze, Reetika Khera and others, it has been stated that there has been an impressive revival of Public Distribution system 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, covering a total of 1227 BPL/Antyodaya Households. Based on the survey made, the researchers have also brought out that there have been major initiatives in the recent past to improve PDS and these efforts are showing results. It has also been pointed out the days when up to half of the PDS grain was diverted to the open market are gone.

(c) and (d) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments wherein 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 (FPSs) rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.

The Central Government is issuing advisories and holding conferences with States/UTs from time to time wherein various issues relating to TPDS are discussed. Such conference of State Food Secretaries on Best Practices and the Reforms in TPDS was held in July, 2010 in New Delhi. Another Conference of Food and Agriculture Ministers of States/UTs was held in February, 2012 wherein various subjects including computerization of TPDS were discussed at length. Issues relating to strengthening of TPDS were also discussed during the Conference of Food Ministers & Food Secretaries of States/UTs held on 29-30 October, 2012, in New Delhi.

Amendment in Bill for protection of consumers

‡2214. SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

‡Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.