

Distributing foodgrains through PDS in drought affected areas

1411. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the status of implementation of the Supreme Court order directing drought affected States to provide foodgrains at PDS outlets; and

(b) whether drought affected States have issued orders for food distribution through PDS outlets, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) In the Writ Petition(C) No. 857 of 2015 filed by Swaraj Abhiyan against the Union of India & Ors., Hon'ble Supreme Court *vide* its order dated 13.05.2016 has directed to provide foodgrains to all households in the drought affected States in terms of National Food Security Act (NFSA) and that no household in a drought affected area shall be denied foodgrains as required under the Act only because the household does not have a ration card.

Under the NFSA, responsibilities for identification of beneficiaries and distribution of foodgrains to the eligible beneficiaries lie with the concerned State Government. Accordingly, above directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court were communicated to the State Governments for compliance. Based on the requests received from the States for additional allocation of foodgrains for drought relief and as per the demand made by the States, Government of India has allocated a total quantity of 30.89 lakh tons of foodgrains during 2015-16 and 2016-17 to the States for drought relief.

Implementation of NFSA

1412. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether only 51 per cent of eligible beneficiaries have been identified under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), if so, by when the identification process will be completed;

(b) whether CAG report on Preparedness for Implementation of NFSA states that there is inadequate number of rakes for transporting foodgrains, inadequate number of godowns and some of them are unfit for usage, if so, the measures Government has taken to improve this situation, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Central Government, has a mechanism in place to ensure that States properly implement the NFSA, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) The National Food Security Act (NFSA) is being implemented in 34 States/UTs covering more than 73 crore persons, against total coverage of 81.34 crore envisaged under the Act.

(b) Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in its report has mentioned about availability of rakes being short of requirement and need for augmenting and upgrading the existing storage facilities. Measures taken by the Government in this regard are as follow:

- (i) Food Corporation of India (FCI) plans rake movement on a monthly basis taking into consideration availability of foodgrain stock in surplus regions, demand from deficit region, likely procurement, vacant storage capacity etc., in order to ensure availability of sufficient foodgrains in the depots of recipient regions.
 - (ii) As on 30.06.2016, storage capacity of 816.24 lakh tons was available for storage of Central Pool stocks against stock levels of 495.95 lakh tons. To meet regional storage requirements, capacity augmentation is being done through Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) scheme on need basis. A capacity of 134.83 lakh tons has been created as on 30.06.2016. To address storage requirements of North Eastern States, FCI has constructed 1.33 lakh tons storage capacity under Plan scheme in the last 4 years. An action plan for construction of steel silos has also been approved for storage of wheat and rice in bulk.
 - (iii) Maintenance of FCI godowns is taken up on regular basis to keep them storage worthy.
- (c) Main responsibility for implementation of NFSA rests with States/UTs. However, implementation of the Act is reviewed/monitored on a regular basis through meetings/conferences with States/UTs at various levels.

Rise in prices of food items

1413. SHRI ANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether food prices remain high despite Government's best efforts;
- (b) if so, the details of steps taken to rein in food prices; and
- (c) the further steps Government is taking to make food prices affordable to all sections of the society?