

Linking of Ration Cards with Aadhaar of beneficiaries would facilitate in ensuring correct targeting of the beneficiaries for distribution of subsidised food grains or cash transfer of food subsidies under NFSA.

(c) Streamlining and upgradation of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is a continuous process. Department of Food and Public Distribution is implementing a Scheme on 'End-to-End Computerisation of TPDS Operations' on cost sharing basis with the States/UTs. The Scheme consists of activities namely, digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, computerisation of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portals and grievance redressal mechanisms and installation of ePoS devices at Fair Price Shops .

(d) Beneficiaries under NFSA including those in Jaisalmer and Bikaner in Rajasthan, who do not possess Aadhaar are required to make application as per provisions of above Notification latest by 31.3.2018, for Aadhaar enrolment by giving their name, address, mobile number with Ration Card number and other details with their fair price shop owners or through the web portal provided for the purpose by State/UT.

Aadhaar-based biometric authentication

1356. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the imposition of Aadhaar-based biometric authentication (ABBA) has derailed the Public Distribution System in Jharkhand resulting in several starvation deaths of marginalised people such as single women, manual labourers and elderly persons due to denying them ration for their failure to link their ration card to Aadhaar; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Central Government to see that the Government of Jharkhand puts in place the safeguards prescribed by the Central Government in its 24 October, 2017 order?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) The Government of Jharkhand has informed that there have been media reports of starvation deaths in Jharkhand, but on inquiry, the allegations of death due to starvation have not been substantiated.

(b) Central Government in the Department of Food and Public Distribution issued detailed instructions to all the States/UTs *vide* D.O. letter No. 1(8)/2017-PD-II dated 24.10.2017 to ensure strict compliance with the provisions contained in the Notification

SO No. 371(E) dated 8.2.2017 [as amended from time to time] to prevent denial of foodgrains to the eligible beneficiaries under NFSA as per their entitlement. Besides, the Department has been in constant dialogue with the State on the issue and the need for effective enforcement of the measures for improvement in the functioning of PDS was further emphasised *vide* D.O. letter No. 1(8)/2017-PD-II dated 12.12.2017 to the Chief Secretary, Jharkhand.

Rise in prices of vegetables

1357. SHRI D. KUPENDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of onion and other seasonal vegetables have increased manifold in the last three months;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the production of onion and other vegetables have come down causing such price rise;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the quantity produced by the country during the last year and the current year so far; and

(e) the effective steps taken/being taken by Government to discourage speculative and unscrupulous trade activities in procuring/trading/selling of onion and other vegetables with heavily inflated prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (d) All India annual inflation rate for vegetables, as per Sub-Group level Consumer Price Index data released by M/o Statistics and Programme Implementation, is given in the table below:—

Base 2012 = 100	
Month	Inflation rate (%)
Aug' 2017	6.16
Sep' 2017	3.92
Oct' 2017	7.47
Nov' 2017	22.48 (P)

P = Provisional

Prices of essential commodities including vegetables are affected by various factors such as mismatch in demand and supply, increased transportation costs, supply chain constraints, artificial shortage created by hoarding and black marketing etc. Prices