

(c) and (d) Technological innovations and deployment of latest technologies thereof is a continuous ongoing process. The radio spectrum and the telecom licenses being awarded by the Government are already technology neutral to facilitate deployment of any technology in the country, including 5G wireless technology. However, in order to steer 5G technology in India, Government has constituted High Level Forum for 5G India 2020. The objective of the forum is to position India as a globally synchronized participant in the design, development and manufacturing of 5G based technologies, products and applications.

Delay in supply of ration due to lack of Aadhaar number

1677. SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN:

SHRI MD. NADIMUL HAQUE:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of any instance where foodgrain benefits to citizens is denied because of lack of Aadhaar card, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the linking of Aadhaar number has caused delay in supply of ration to people, if so, the details of such delay, State-wise; and

(c) whether Government has recorded the number of starvation deaths which are linked to delay in ration supply because of lack of Aadhaar number, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) A few reports have of late appeared in the media citing non-linking of Aadhaar with Ration Cards as one of the reasons for difficulties faced by the beneficiaries in few states under National Food Security Act [NFSA] in getting their entitled quota of foodgrains. However, those State Governments reported that the death could not be attributed to starvation/denial of subsidised foodgrains.

As per provisions of the notification issued *vide* SO No. 371[E] dated 8/2/17 [as amended from time to time], by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, all the eligible beneficiaries entitled to receive subsidised foodgrains or Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy under National Food Security Act [NFSA] 2013 who do not possess Aadhaar number or, are not yet enrolled for Aadhaar, but are desirous of availing subsidised food grains or Cash Transfer of Food Subsidies under NFSA, are required to make application for Aadhaar enrolment by 31/3/2018. The notification provides that till the Aadhaar is assigned to beneficiaries/households,

benefit of subsidized food grains or Cash Transfer for Food grains under NFSA shall be given to such beneficiaries/households subject to the production of Ration Card, and either Aadhaar Enrolment ID Slip, or copy of his/her request made to State Government for Aadhaar Enrolment along with any of the 8 documents listed in the said notification (*i.e.* Voter ID Card, PAN Card, Passport, Driving License, Certificate of Identity with photo issued by Gazetted Officer/Tehsildar on official letter head, Address card having Name and Photo issued by Department of Posts, Kisan Photo Passbook and any other document as specified by State/UT Governments)

Besides, this Department has issued clear instructions to all States/UTs that no beneficiary/household shall be deleted from the list of eligible beneficiaries/households only on the ground of not possessing Aadhaar, and shall also not be denied for subsidized foodgrains or cash transfer of food subsidy under NFSA due to non-availability of Aadhaar or failure of biometric authentication due to network/connectivity/linking issues/poor biometric of the beneficiary or other technical reasons.

Service charge in restaurant bills

1678. SHRI MAJEED MEMON: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of people who did not pay or refused to pay the service charge at restaurants has increased to 37 per cent in January, 2018 from 35 per cent in November, 2017;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether despite the fact that the Ministry had called it an unethical business practice, restaurants still continue to charge this component in their bills; and

(d) if so, whether Government has taken steps to penalise such restaurant establishments, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) An online poll conducted by Local Circles, a social media platform, among 8013 consumers revealed that 37% consumers did not pay service charge at restaurants in January, 2018. On an earlier poll conducted in this regard, the figure stood at 35% for the month of November, 2017.

(b) The Department of Consumer Affairs issued guidelines in April, 2017 on fair trade practices related to charging of service charge from consumers by hotels/restaurants and issued advertisements through print and electronic media to educate the consumers on the matter.