

Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) is now being implemented in all the 36 States/ Union Territories (UTs) including Kerala. Out of the total intended coverage of 81.34 crore, presently, 79.41 crore persons are covered under the Act for receiving highly subsidized foodgrains.

(b) Foodgrains at subsidized prices is made available by Food Corporation of India (FCI) to the States/UTs under the NFSA, as well as erstwhile Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), for which food subsidy is released to FCI. Only in the case of States participating in the Decentralized Procurement, under which State Government take responsibility of procurement of foodgrains and its distribution to the eligible households, that food subsidy is released directly to State Governments. Under this scheme, ₹ 449.70 crore has been released to State Government of Kerala in 2018-19, so far. The Central Government undertakes to meet the expenditure incurred by the State Governments on the procurement operation as per approved costing norms. State-wise budgeting is not undertaken.

Central Government also provides Central assistance to States/UTs under NFSA for meeting expenditure on intra-State movement and handling of foodgrains and fair price shop dealers' margin as per approved norms. No fund has been released to State Government of Kerala under this scheme so far.

A Scheme on 'End-to-End Computerization of TPDS Operations' is also under implementation on a cost sharing basis with the State Governments. The scheme provides for digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, online allocation, computerization of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portal and grievance redressal mechanism. Central financial assistance of ₹ 10.95 crore has been released to Government of Kerala for implementation of the scheme so far.

#### **Pilferage of PDS ration**

2648. SHRI RIPUN BORA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any complaints on pilferage of PDS ration items through fraudulent PoS transactions;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Uttar Pradesh has registered over two lakh cases of such fraudulent transactions;

(c) if so, the details of cases registered therein; and

(d) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (d) As per the information furnished by State Government of Uttar Pradesh, the matter regarding fraudulent ePoS transactions cases at some Fair Price Shops of urban areas came to notice in the month of August, 2018 as 1,87,635 illegal transactions were recorded in month of July, 2018. A total of 517 FIRs have been registered. As reported, Aadhaar authentication facilities have been misused through login IDs of Computer Operators/Supply Inspectors. State Government has appointed Addl. Commissioner (Food) as Nodal Officer and also constituted a three member Technical Committee for the support of Special Task Force of Police for investigation.

Public Distribution System (PDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State/UT Governments. Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains up to the designated depots of the FCI. The operational responsibilities for allocation and distribution of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible beneficiaries/families, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision and monitoring of functioning of FPSs rest with the concerned State/UT Government. There have been complaints/reports from individuals, organisation as well as through press reports relating to untimely supply of foodgrains, leakage/diversion of foodgrains, inclusion/exclusion errors, bogus/ineligible ration cards being in circulation, irregular functioning of FPSs, beneficiaries not getting their entitled quota of foodgrains, allotment of fair price shops in an arbitrary manner etc. As per National Food Security (NFSA) Act, 2013 and Targeted Public Distribution System [Control] Orders, responsibility of addressing all such issues fall under the purview of respective State/UT Governments. Therefore, as and when shortcomings/complaints are received by this Department, these are referred to the concerned State/UT Government for inquiry and appropriate action.

#### **Banning of telecom gear**

2649. SHRI MAHESH PODDAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has considered banning of telecom gear and equipment made by Huawei in the country, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether the use of telecom gear and equipment made by Huawei can compromise national security, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has conducted its own due diligence for determining the security threats posed by equipment made by Huawei, if so, the details thereof; and