

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) has been implemented in all States/UTs, *inter alia* the Act entitles up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban population, covering nearly two-third of the country's population (about 81.34 crore persons, as per census 2011), to receive highly subsidized foodgrains through Public Distribution System (PDS) under two categories *viz.* Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH).

The AAY households are entitled to receive 35 kg. of foodgrains per household per month, whereas, the Priority households are entitled to receive 5 kg. of foodgrains per person per month, at the Central Issue Prices of ₹ 1/2/3 per kg. for Coarse-grains/Wheat/Rice respectively.

To modernize and bring more transparency in the functioning of PDS, the Central Government in association with all State/UT Governments is implementing a scheme on "End-to-End Computerization of Public Distribution System (PDS) Operations" under which digitization of ration cards has been completed in all States/UTs, transparency portals and facility for online grievance redressal/toll-free helpline numbers are implemented in all States/UTs, online allocation of foodgrains up to all Fair Price Shops (FPSs) has been implemented in all States/UTs, except in two UTs which have opted for DBT cash transfer scheme.

Further to identify duplicate/ineligible ration cards/beneficiaries and to enable 'rightful targeting of food subsidy' the available Aadhaar numbers of beneficiaries are also being seeded by the States/UTs with the ration cards. At present, nearly 85.57% ration cards have been seeded with Aadhaar numbers of at least one member of the beneficiary household at national level. Also, more than 3.88 lakh out of 5.33 lakh FPSs have been automated across the country by using electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices.

Besides, a new Central Sector Scheme "Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)" is being implemented for achieving national level portability of ration card holders to lift the entitled foodgrains from anywhere in the country.

Starvation deaths

681. PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether many households are excluded from the Public Distribution System as ration card quotas are based on the 2011 Census, if so, whether Government has prepared any plan to tackle this issue;

(b) the number of Antyodaya ration cards cancelled in the financial year 2018-19, till date and procedure followed by Government for cancelling ration cards;

(c) whether the list of cancelled ration cards is available in the public domain, if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the number of reported starvation deaths since 2014, State-wise; and

(e) the measures Ministry has taken on cases of starvation deaths and to prevent such deaths in the future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) came in force w.e.f. 5th July, 2013. The Act is implemented across the country, and provides coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving subsidized foodgrains. Thus 81.34 crores persons of the country as per Census 2011 may be covered under the NFSA.

As per Targeted Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2015, State/UT Governments are required to review the lists of beneficiaries every year for the purpose of deletion of ineligible families and inclusion of eligible families. As per the TPDS (Control) Order and technology led reforms in PDS, State/UT Governments are able to detect and delete ineligible/fake/duplicate ration cards and as also due to migration/death(s) of beneficiaries, change in economic status of household, etc. As reported by States/UTs, till date, a total of 7.62 lakh ration cards have been deleted in the year 2018.

(c) Public Distribution System (PDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains upto the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India. The operational responsibilities for identification of eligible beneficiaries, issuance of ration cards to them, allocation and distribution of foodgrains within the States/UTs and the supervision over and monitoring of functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) rest with the concerned State/UT Governments. The list of cancelled ration cards is made available in the public domain by the concerned State/UT Government.

(d) A few reports have of-late appeared in the media alleging starvation deaths in some States, but on inquiry, the allegations of death due to starvation have not been substantiated.

(e) This Department has issued clear instructions to all States/UTs that no person/household shall be deleted from the list of eligible households and denied of subsidized foodgrain under NFSA only on the ground of not possessing of Aadhaar number. Instructions are also issued for providing foodgrains even in the event of authentication failure through alternative mechanisms.

Restructuring of FCI

682. SHRI M. P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the status of implementaion of the recommendations made by the High Level Committee on Restructuring of Food Corporation of India (FCI); and

(b) the details of funds allocated, released and utilised for implementation of the Committee's recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) Several recommendations of the High Level Committee (HLC) have been accepted, with minor modifications wherever deemed appropriate. The status of action taken and fund utilized for the implementation of major recommendations is given in Statement.