

Cooperation (SAARC), including Bangladesh, under the provisions of The Agreement, on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). However, SAFTA prescribes certain value addition in the territory of the exporting member country before the product is eligible for concessionary duty under the agreement. Similarly, under Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme, India has allowed duty-free quota-free access to almost all products from LDCs, including Bangladesh. DFTP scheme also prescribes certain value addition norms, upon fulfillment of which a product is eligible for concessionary duty under the scheme. Hence, only those third-country origin products that fulfill the value addition norms under SAFTA and DFTP scheme can avail the respective concessionary duties.

Central Board of Indirect taxes and Customs (CBIC), Ministry of Finance has, however, been requested to take necessary steps for strict verification of value addition norms relating to import of products, to ensure that no import of third-country origin products takes place through the neighbouring countries, without due compliance to the prescribed norms of value addition.

#### **State of hunger in the country**

3090. SHRI MANAS RANJAN BHUNIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country, with 277 million tonne food production, stands at 103rd position out of 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index with a score of 31.1;

(b) if so, the steps Government is going to take to face this challenge of serious hunger state; and

(c) the reasons for this condition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) As per information available in the public domain, India's ranking in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) brought out by Concern World Wide is 103. As per GHI Report 2018 of Concern World Wide, the composite GHI scores of India have improved from 38.8 in 2000 to 31.1 in 2018. Thus the country has shown consistent improvement over the years.

(b) and (c) The Government of India accords high priority to the issue of hunger and has been providing foodgrains at highly subsidized prices to the targeted population through State Governments/Union Territory Administrations under the Targeted Public

Distribution System (TPDS) in terms of National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) such as Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Wheat Based Nutrition Programme, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, Annapurna Scheme and Allocation of foodgrains under Welfare Institutions and Hostels Scheme.

NFSA provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving foodgrains under TPDS, thus covering about two-thirds of the population of the country for receiving foodgrains @ Rs 1/2/3 per kg for nutri-cereals/wheat/rice respectively. Identification of beneficiaries under the Act is under two categories- households covered under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH), within the coverage determined for the State/UT. While Priority Households are entitled to receive 5 kg per person per month, AAY households, which constitute the poorest of the poor, continue to receive 35 Kg of foodgrains per household per month. At present, the Act is being implemented in all the States/UTs covering about 80 crore persons to get highly subsidized foodgrains. During the year 2018-19, the Government allocated a quantity of 612.18 lakh MT of foodgrains to the States/UTs under NFSA, Other Welfare Schemes and allocations due to natural calamities and festivals.

Further, Government of India has issued advisories to all States/UTs to identify and cover the weakest sections of the society under PDS and launch special drives to issue ration cards to them. Advisories have been issued to all State/UTs that no beneficiary/household shall be deleted from the list of eligible beneficiaries/households only on the grounds of not possessing Aadhaar and shall also not be denied subsidized foodgrains or cash transfer of food subsidy under NFSA due to non-availability of Aadhaar or failure of biometric authentication.

#### **Distribution of nutritious rice under PDS**

3091. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government would roll out a pilot project in 15 districts to fortify rice with iron, folic acid and vitamins A and B 12 in a bid to reduce nutrition deficiencies among the beneficiaries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that it would be available in ration shops from November, 2019?