

Simplification of issuing of ration cards

2288. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly three crore ration cards of poor people have been cancelled by authorities across the country on account of non-matching of Aadhaar details and other minors reasons;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto; and

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government for the simplification of issuing ration card to every needy person to avoid any starvation death in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) and (b) Due to computerization of PDS operations, *i.e.* digitization of ration cards/beneficiaries' database, online detection of ineligible/duplicate ration cards, migration/deaths of beneficiaries, de-duplication with Aadhaar and during the run-up to and implementation of NFSA, the States/UTs have been able to remove a Total of about 2.98 crore ineligible ration cards since 2013 till date. Against the deleted ration cards, new ration cards are issued by concerned States/UTs to eligible households/beneficiaries for rightful targeting of food subsidy.

(c) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibilities of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. The operational responsibilities *i.e.* identification of eligible households/beneficiaries, issuance of ration cards by their own defined procedure and including monitoring and management of FPSs etc. rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.

Besides, this Department has issued the advisories to all State/UT Governments from time-to-time to launch special drives for identification and issuance of ration cards to persons of the economically weakest sections of the society, so that the objective of NFSA is fully achieved.

Further, this Department has issued instructions to all States/UTs, that no genuine beneficiary/household shall be deleted from the list of eligible households and denied

from their entitled foodgrains under NFSA, only on the ground of not possessing an Aadhaar/biometric authentication or due to other technical reasons etc.

Loss of jobs in gems and jewellery sector

2289. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has assessed the loss of jobs in gems and jewellery sector of the country during the last five years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the action Government proposes to take to make this sector more employment oriented?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) to (c) The gems and jewellery sector is one of the leading sectors in India in terms of value of export as well as employment generation. The sector has contributed around 12-15% in country's Total merchandise exports during the last five years. As per industry estimates, the sector provides employment to approximately 50 lakh skilled and semi-skilled workforce. There is no mechanism for assessment of job loss in gems and jewellery sector. However, in order to promote exports from gems and jewellery sector, which in turn will also increase employment opportunities in the sector, the Government has taken several measures through Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20 and other policy measures taken from time to time. FTP provides framework for increasing exports as well as generation of employment and increasing value addition in the country through schemes of incentives on exports and duty remission/exemption on input for export production. Further, the Government also provides financial assistance for participation in international fairs, organizing buyer-seller meets, creation of export related infrastructure, setting up of Common Facility Centres etc. under various schemes of the Department of Commerce to boost exports.

India out of USA's list of developing nations

2290. SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India is out of USA's developing nations list for trade benefits;