

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1537
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2021

DISTRIBUTION OF FOODGRAINS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1537 SHRI SANJAY SINGH:

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

- (a) the list of foodgrains along with quantity distributed across States during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (b) whether the existing systems were capable enough to handle the heavy workload of disbursal of free foodgrains to over 70-80 crore people under AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan;
- (c) the major challenges that were faced in this colossal task; and
- (d) whether any quality checks were performed while procuring huge stocks of foodgrains?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONSUMER
AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SADHVI NIRANJAN JYOTI)

(a): As per the reports received from the States/UTs and Food Corporation of India (FCI), during the COVID-19 period, from April 2020 up to November 2021, so far the States/UTs have done total offtake/distribution of 1,340 LMT foodgrains (approx) under the regular National Food Security Act (NFSA), Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) and the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Scheme (ANBS), as per the list below:

List of foodgrains	Total offtake/distribution from April 2020 to November 2021
Rice	About 771 Lakh Metric Tons
Wheat	About 569 Lakh Metric Tons

.....2/-

(b): Yes Sir. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the existing Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) of the country swiftly rose to the fore for distributing the additional free-of-cost foodgrains (Rice & Wheat) to around 80 Crore (NFSA) beneficiaries under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY), at the scale of 5 Kg per person per month, over and above the regular monthly NFSA foodgrain. Besides, the States/UTs also efficiently distributed free of cost foodgrains to about 2.74 Crore migrants/stranded migrant persons and persons neither covered under NFSA nor any other State PDS scheme for a period of 2 months of May and June 2020 under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Scheme (ANBS), as part of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

(c): During the COVID-19 pandemic, the major challenge faced was to ensure timely distribution of almost double the quantity of monthly foodgrains to around 80 Crore NFSA beneficiaries every month while ensuring all COVID-19 protocols and COVID-19 appropriate behavior is followed at all places of the PDS operations, especially the 5.3 Lakh Fair Price Shops (FPSs) in the country. Accordingly, the Department had issued advisories to all States/UTs to ensure the distribution of foodgrains to all beneficiaries with all COVID safety protocols in place. States/UTs were also suggested to ensure staggered distribution timings and to remain open during the maximum period of the day as well as during maximum calendar days of the month for efficient and ensured distribution of foodgrains to beneficiaries during the time of crisis. FCI and other agencies maintained the continuous supply of foodgrains across the country, using various modes of transportation including air.

(d): Before commencement of every Kharif and Rabi Marketing Season, Storage and Research Division of the Department formulates the Uniform Specification of foodgrains to facilitate procurement operations.

Further, Storage and Research Division of the Department is also mandated to undertake quality control activities with respect to the foodgrains stocks meant for central pool and its monitoring during procurement, storage as well as distribution to the eligible beneficiaries through various social security programmes. These activities are undertaken on a regular basis.
