

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**QUESTION NO 07.03.2011**  
**ANSWERED ON**  
**NORMS FOR TARGETED PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM .**

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Shri Praveen Rashtupal

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

- (a) the norms for the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) for making allocation of foodgrains to the States;
- (b) whether the State Governments are satisfied with the norms; and
- (c) whether it is a fact that there is a huge variation in the poverty (BPL, etc.) estimates of the Planning Commission and other Government agencies?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

(PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a), (b) & (c) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO.146 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 07.03.2011 IN THE RAJYA SABHA.

(a) to (c): For allocation of foodgrains (wheat and rice) to States and Union Territories (UTs) under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Department of Food & Public Distribution uses the number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and the population estimates of the Registrar General of India as on 1st March 2000 or the number of such families actually identified and ration cards issued to them by the State/UT Governments, whichever is less. As per 1993-94 poverty estimates, the percentage of population living below poverty line at all India level is 36%. As per these estimates, the number of BPL families is 6.52 crore, which includes about 2.44 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Allocation of foodgrains to these 6.52 crore BPL families, including AAY families, are made @ 35 kg per family per month. Allocation of foodgrains to Above Poverty Line (APL) families are made depending upon the availability of foodgrains in the central pool and the past offtake. Presently, the allocation of foodgrains to APL families ranges between 10 and 35 kg per family per month. Some State Governments have issued larger number of BPL ration cards. A few State Governments have also made requests for increasing the accepted number of BPL families under TPDS. Government of India, however, has been adopting uniform criteria across all States/UTs. Hence, the request from these States/UTs for increasing the accepted number of BPL families could not be agreed to.

Planning Commission constituted an Expert Group to review the methodology of estimation of poverty under the Chairmanship of Prof. Suresh D. Tendulkar. The Expert Group has, inter-alia, estimated the All-India poverty headcount ratio for 2004-05 at 37.2%.

In addition to poverty estimates of the Planning Commission, some other agencies have also given their estimates on poverty. Ministry of Rural Development had appointed an Expert Group to suggest methodology for conducting the next BPL census in rural areas. In the report submitted by the Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. N.C Saxena, it is, inter-alia, mentioned that the percentage of people entitled to BPL status should be revised upwards to at least 50%. However, the terms of reference of the Expert Group to advise the Ministry of Rural Development on the methodology for conducting the BPL Census for the 11th Five Year Plan does not include estimation of poverty. Besides, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Arjun K. Sengupta, in its Report on Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector has indicated that in 2004-05,

the Extremely Poor constituted 6.4 percent, the Poor 15.4 percent, the Marginally Poor 19.0 percent. These three constituted 41 percent of the population. If the vulnerable are added to this group, the total accounts for 77 percent of the population.