

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 07.03.2011
ANSWERED ON
URBAN FOOD SECURITY SCENARIO .

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SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN

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

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- (a) whether, as per the World Food Programme of the United Nations and the Swaminathan Research Foundation, it has been indicated that the urban food security situation in the country has worsened and PDS has failed to achieve its objectives;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto; and
- (c) the steps taken to revamp PDS and to improve the food security situation in the country?

ANSWER

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

(PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) to (c): The Report on the State of Food Insecurity in Urban India, published by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and the World Food Programme in 2010, has studied the situation of India and its major States with regard to urban food security by looking at the aspects of availability, access and absorption. Using indicators that relate to food access, food absorption and nutritional outcomes, six variants of a composite index of food and nutrition insecurity for the urban areas of the major States were constructed. It has been indicated in the report that it is clear that no matter which variant of the overall index of urban food insecurity for urban India as a whole is considered, there has been an improvement in the situation.

As per the Report, the Public Distribution System (PDS) has been an extremely important instrument of food security in India. It also, inter-alia, mentions that it is important to improve the functioning of PDS, which is far from satisfactory in many respects.

With a view to specifically target poor sections of society for distribution of subsidized foodgrains (rice, wheat & coarse grains) and sugar, Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was launched in 1997. Under TPDS, foodgrains @ 35 kg. per family per month are allocated to States/Union Territories for 6.52 crore accepted number of BPL/AAY families for distribution at subsidized prices through Fair Price Shops. Depending upon their availability in central pool and past offtake, foodgrains are also allocated to Above Poverty Line (APL) families. Presently, the allocations for APL category range between 10 and 35 kg foodgrains per family per month.

In addition to allocation of foodgrains under TPDS, the Government makes allocations of foodgrains under other Welfare Schemes such as Midday Meal Scheme and Wheat based Nutrition Programme also. Further, this Department has been making additional allocation of foodgrains to the State Governments/Union Territories Administrations in case of emergencies like floods, droughts, etc. Additional allocation of foodgrains has also been made from time to time depending upon the availability of stocks and requirement/requests received from States/UTs.

Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 mandates the State and UT Governments to carry out all required actions to ensure smooth functioning of the TPDS.

Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has been regularly requesting State/UT Governments for continuous review of lists of BPL and AAY families, ensuring timely availability of foodgrains at FPSs, bringing about greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, improved monitoring and vigilance at all levels and introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operations at various levels.