

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2783
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24TH MARCH, 2023

REDUCTION IN FOOD SUBSIDIES

2783 DR. AMEE YAJNIK:
SHRI SYED NASIR HUSSAIN:

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

- (a) the reasons for a reduction of 31 per cent in foodgrain subsidy for the poor from ₹ 2,87,194.05 crore in previous year's BE to ₹ 1,97,350 crore for FY 2023-24;
- (b) whether Government has a substantial reason for opposing the Supreme Court's Order to expand the beneficiaries under the Food Security Act, as the number of people receiving the law's benefits is based on the now-outdated 2011 Census, leaving at least 10 crores Indians excluded from the program; and
- (c) whether Food Corporation of India (FCI) has to opt for off-budget borrowings to meet its requirement for current year's procurement?

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

(a): In the wake of COVID-19 outbreak in the country in March 2020, the Department of Food and Public Distribution had started the distribution of 'additional' and 'free-of-cost' foodgrains (Rice/Wheat) to around 80 crore Priority Household (PHH) and Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) beneficiaries in the country under PMGKAY to ameliorate the food security hardships faced by the poor and needy due to unprecedented outbreak of the pandemic and lockdowns. Under PMGKAY, about 1,118 LMT foodgrains have been allocated with an earmarked total financial outlay of approximately Rs. 3.91 lakh crore upto 31.12.2022 from Phase-I to Phase-VII of the scheme. Now the Central Government is distributing free foodgrains to all NFSA beneficiaries, as per their entitlement, under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) from 1st Jan,2023.

Government of India has been providing sufficient funds to meet the requirement of food subsidy of the Department and funds allocated in BE for FY 2023-24 are sufficient.

(b): The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is now governed as per the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013 which provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population, which at Census 2011 comes to 81.35 crore persons. At present, against the intended coverage of 81.35 crore, 80.11 crore beneficiaries are identified by the States/UTs under the Act.

Section 9 of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) provides that the percentage coverage under the Targeted Public Distribution System in rural and urban areas for each State shall be determined by the Central Government and the total number of persons to be covered in the State shall be calculated on the basis of the population estimates as per the census of which the relevant figures have been published. As at the time of implementation of NFSA, the latest published figures of Census pertained to the year 2011, the same was used to determine the coverage of all States/Union Territories (UTs).

(c): No, Sir. Food Corporation of India has been provided sufficient funds to meet its requirement during the current year.
