

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

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.244
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11TH AUGUST, 2023

COVERAGE UNDER PDS

244 SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries are decided on the basis of 2011 census data;
- (b) if so, considering the fact that the census has been delayed, steps taken to ensure that there are no exclusions and the beneficiaries get their due under Public Distribution System (PDS);
- (c) whether it is also a fact that intra-State transactions under One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) are much larger than inter-State transactions, if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken by Government to spread awareness and information about ration card portability, especially among migrants?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC
DISTRIBUTION AND TEXTILES
(SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE STARRED QUESTION
NO. *244 FOR ANSWER ON 11.08.2023 IN THE RAJYA SABHA

(a): 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. At the time of implementation of NFSA, the latest published figures of Census pertaining to the year 2011 was used to determine the coverage of all States/Union Territories (UTs).

(b): The National Food Security Act, 2013 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. Intent of the Government for conducting Census 2021 was notified in Gazette of India on 28th March, 2019. Due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the Census 2021 and the related field activities could not be undertaken.

At present, against the intended coverage of 81.35 crore, 80.24 crore beneficiaries are identified by the States/UTs under the Act. Still, there is scope for identification of 1.11 crore additional beneficiaries under the Act by the State Governments. The Coverage under the Act is sufficient high to ensure that all the vulnerable and needy sections of the society get its benefit.

(c): The main objective of One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) is to empower all beneficiaries including migrant beneficiaries to access their NFSA foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice, anywhere in the country, by using their same existing ration card with biometric authentication on an electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) device.

Under Intra-State portability, NFSA beneficiaries are allowed to avail ration from any FPS within the State including nearby FPSs to avoid travel to tagged (original) FPS whereas Inter-State portability is being used by migrant NFSA beneficiaries outside their native/home State. Since, number of beneficiaries visiting near by FPSs are more than the beneficiaries who working outside their home State, therefore, Intra-State Portability transactions are comparatively more.

While, the Inter-State portability gives flexibility to migrant beneficiaries to be self-reliant for their food security and ease of living with livelihood anywhere in the country, at the same time it also allows their family members back in the village/home (if any) to also draw the part/balance foodgrains on the same ration card for their food security.

(d): A nationwide campaign has been carried out to create awareness among the NFSA beneficiaries about ONORC in different modes viz. FM/Radio channels, displaying audio visual spots at railway stations, banners, posters at outdoors and Fair Price Shops (FPSs), bus wraps etc. Apart from this States/UTs employed their own means for these campaigns.

Recently, this Department has launched an awareness generation campaign of ONORC on 168 FM channels and 45 TV Channels across the country for which a 30 second radio spot and a 30 second Tele Vision Commercials (TVCs) have been developed in 12 different languages viz. Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu.
