

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1841
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH AUGUST, 2023

BIOMETRIC FAILURE OF PDS

1841 # SHRI VIJAY PAL SINGH TOMAR:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware that many beneficiaries are unable to avail their monthly ration due to biometric failures and left out of safety net;
- (b) if so, whether Government has conducted any survey to understand the reasons for biometric failures, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of beneficiaries who are unable to avail their ration due to biometric failure;
- (d) whether Government proposes to withdraw biometric authentication at Public Distribution System (PDS) shops; and
- (e) if not, the alternative measures taken by Government for distribution of ration to those who failed in biometric authentication?

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

(a)to (e): As part of the concurrent evaluation of implementation of National Food Security Act (NFSA), some Monitoring Institutions (MIs) have been engaged by the Department which reported some instances of biometric authentication failures due to internet connectivity issues, fingerprint issues, among others. However, the ration has been distributed using exception management methods in case of biometric authentication failure. Further, no such proposal is under consideration to withdraw biometric authentication at Public Distribution System (PDS) shops.

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As per National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013, this Department allocates foodgrains to States/UTs for distribution to around 80 crore NFSA beneficiaries in the country on a monthly basis. Further, due to Aadhaar seeding and installation of ePoS devices at the FPSs, at present, more than 95% transactions in the country are done in a transparent manner through biometric authentication by use of ePoS devices on a monthly basis. All States/UTs have been advised that no genuine beneficiary or household shall be denied from receiving entitled quota of subsidized foodgrains only for want of Aadhaar or due to failure of biometric/Aadhaar authentication due to network/connectivity/linking related issues, other technical reasons, or poor biometrics of the beneficiary. As per provisions of this Department's Notification dated 8 February 2017, till the Aadhaar is assigned to the beneficiaries, either of the eight identification documents shall be used for identification purpose i.e. (Voter ID Card, PAN Card, Passport, Driving License, Certificate of Identity with photo issued by Gazetted Officer/Tahsildar on official letter head, Address card having Name and Photo issued by Department of Posts, Kisan Photo Passbook and any other document as specified by State/UT Governments). Also, the timeline given to all States/UTs for linking of Aadhaar numbers of beneficiaries with their ration cards has been extended upto 30/09/2023.
