

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1632
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2024

COVERAGE OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT

1632 **SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA:**
SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:

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

- (a) whether the Ministry intends to reduce the coverage of the National Food Security Act as recommended by the High-Level Committee (2015) on Restructuring of FCI to 40 percent of the population;
- (b) whether the Ministry is considering increasing foodgrain allocation for BPL households to 7 kg per person to align with the previous entitlement under the targeted PDS, if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the measures to remedy the instances of biometric authentication failures after the automation of fair price shops which have led to exclusion issues, particularly among elderly beneficiaries?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS,
FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRIMATI NIMUBEN JAYANTIBHAI BAMBHANIYA)

(a): The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is now governed as per the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) 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, 80.67 crore beneficiaries are identified by the States/UTs under the Act for receiving foodgrains free of cost.

At present, there is no proposal to reduce the coverage under the NFSA.

.....2/-

(b): Identification of beneficiaries under the NFSA Act is under two categories- Antyodaya Anna Yojana Households and the Priority Households. While Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households constitute the poorest of the poor and are legally entitled to receive 35 kg of foodgrains per family per month, the Priority Households are entitled to 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month. There is no BPL category under the Act.

(c): 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. It is also advised that Aadhaar authentication of beneficiaries either biometrically or IRIS or through Aadhaar-OTP (SMS on beneficiary mobile) through ePoS device should be the most preferred mode of authentication. Alternatively, PDS-OTP (SMS on the beneficiary's mobile), if available, may also be used to authenticate the transaction. If any State/UT devise any other methodology of authentication of beneficiaries during the distribution of foodgrains, then, the concerned State/UT may ensure that such distribution takes place in the presence of a responsible Govt. Officer/Employee for ensuring the delivery of food grains to the right persons/beneficiaries. It is also suggested that transaction receipts from ePoS devices must be given to all beneficiaries after the transaction.
