

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2426
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2024

IMPACT OF RISING FOOD PRICES ON NUTRITIONAL SECURITY

2426 **SHRI SANJAY RAUT:**

Will the Minister of *Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution* be pleased to state:

- (a) in what manner rising food prices affect the nutritional security of marginalized communities and the key consequences on their health and well-being;
- (b) the role PDS and welfare programs play in ensuring food accessibility amid rising prices and in what manner they can be improved;
- (c) whether the current social safety nets in the country are sufficient to protect vulnerable populations from the effects of food price inflation and the additional measures that could be implemented; and
- (d) the factors which led to the discontinuation of 'Bharat' brand products such as flour, rice, pulses and to what extent this would impact efforts to alleviate consumer financial strain?

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

(a) to (c): Government enacted the National Food Security Act, 2013 which provides food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. The Act provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural and upto 50% of the urban population, i.e. about two-thirds of the total population of the country, for receiving foodgrains i.e. rice/ wheat/ coarsegrains at prices specified in Schedule-I of the Act. The Coverage under the Act is substantially high to ensure that all the vulnerable and needy sections of the society get its benefit. In order to remove the financial burden of the poor beneficiaries and to ensure nationwide uniformity and effective implementation of the programme for support of the poor, the Central Government is providing food grains free of cost to beneficiaries, from 1st January 2023 onwards.

....2/-

Further, in order to manage the overall food security, to prevent hoarding and unscrupulous speculation, the Government of India also imposes stock limits on Wheat applicable to Traders/Wholesalers, Retailers, Big Chain Retailers and Processors in all States and Union Territories. In addition to maintaining Foodgrains stocking norms and meeting the requirement of the TPDS and OWS, FCI, on the instructions from the Government, sells excess stocks of Wheat and Rice from the Central Pool at pre-determined prices in the open market from time to time under Open Market Sale Scheme(D) to offload the excess stocks and to moderate the prices in open market.

(d): Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice were launched on 6.11.2023 and 6.02.2024 respectively to make available atta (wheat flour) and rice to general consumers at subsidized rates. Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice is being sold through three central cooperative organizations viz. National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), Kendriya Bhandar and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited (NCCF). The retail sale of Bharat Dals (Chana Dal, Moong Dal, Masur Dal) make pulses available to consumers at affordable prices.
