

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

**RAJYA SABHA**  
STARRED QUESTION NO.272  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 19<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2025**

**PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION IN PDS**

272 **SHRI AJIT KUMAR BHUYAN:**

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

- (a) the key steps which have been taken to curb corruption and embezzlement in the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the last five years;
- (b) the actions taken against officials found diverting subsidized foodgrains to the open markets, and the directions issued to States in this regard;
- (c) whether Government is considering to expand the PDS food basket;
- (d) the major initiatives undertaken to plug leakages and reduce corruption in the PDS in the last five years;
- (e) whether Government has identified and removed fake or duplicate ration cards; and
- (f) the action taken against individuals found guilty of irregularities?

**A N S W E R**  
MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND  
MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY  
**(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)**

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

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. \*272 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 19.08.2025 IN THE RAJYA SABHA**

**(a):** Over the past five years, significant reforms have been implemented to curb corruption and embezzlement in the Public Distribution System (PDS). All ration cards and beneficiary databases in States/UTs have been digitized, with 99.8% Aadhaar seeding and PDS transaction with 98.7% biometric authentication, eliminating fake and duplicate entries. Transparency portals, online grievance redressal facilities, and toll-free helplines are operational across the country. Nearly all Fair Price Shops (FPS) are automated with electronic Point-of-Sale (ePoS) devices for Aadhaar-based authentication, ensuring transparent grain distribution.

The supply chain has been computerized in 31 States/UTs, with online allocation in all States/UTs and tracking through Vehicle Tracking Systems and Depot Online Systems. The "One Nation, One Ration Card" scheme enables portability nationwide, benefiting migrant populations. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is implemented in certain areas to transfer subsidies directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts.

Enforcement has been strengthened under the Targeted PDS (Control) Order, 2015, with violations punishable under Section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, empowering States/UTs to act against offenders. Technological innovations, including digital weighing scales, CCTVs, SMS alerts, and blockchain pilots, further enhance transparency, significantly reducing leakages and improving accountability in PDS operations.

**(b):** The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), governed under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation, and transportation of foodgrains up to the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India (FCI). The operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible beneficiary families, issuance of ration cards, distribution of foodgrains to eligible beneficiaries under TPDS, and supervision and monitoring of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) rest with the respective State/UT Governments.

Action against officials found diverting subsidized foodgrains to the open market is taken by the concerned State/UT Governments, which may include suspension, departmental inquiries, removal from service, filing of criminal cases, and recovery of losses. Such action is taken under the provisions of the TPDS (Control) Order, 2015, and other applicable service or criminal laws. Violations are also punishable under Section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

The Central Government has repeatedly advised States/UTs to strengthen vigilance, conduct regular inspections of FPSs, ensure end-to-end computerization of PDS operations, and take strict punitive action against any officials or licensees involved in diversion or malpractice.

**(c):** As per the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), the term "foodgrains" is defined as rice, wheat or coarse grains or any combination thereof conforming to such quality norms as may be determined, by order, by the Central Government from time to time. At present, no proposal for inclusion of more commodities under the Act is under consideration of the Government.

**(d) to (f):** Yes, the Government, in coordination with States/UTs, has identified and removed fake or duplicate ration cards through technology-driven reforms in the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

As an outcome of the use of technology in TPDS operations since 2013—such as digitization of ration cards/beneficiary databases, Aadhaar seeding, de-duplication, and identification of ineligible records, deaths, and permanent migration—States/UTs have weeded out approximately 5.87 crore ration cards to achieve rightful targeting.

Further, as stated above, State/UT Governments are already empowered under Section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to take punitive action in case of contravention of relevant provisions of the Targeted Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2015. Accordingly, complaints or grievances relating to PDS issues, whenever received from any source, are referred to the concerned State/UT Government for inquiry and appropriate action.

Actions taken against individuals found guilty of irregularities include cancellation of ration cards, recovery of wrongly availed benefits, initiation of criminal proceedings, and other punitive measures under applicable laws. States/UTs have also been directed to strengthen monitoring, conduct regular inspections, and ensure strict enforcement to prevent recurrence of such irregularities.

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