

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

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 119
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH FEBRUARY, 2026

COVERAGE OF BENEFICIARIES UNDER NFSA

119: SHRI SANDOSH KUMAR P:

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

- (a): whether the existing coverage of beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) is below the statutory limit of 67 per cent of the population;
- (b): the specific steps taken by Government to comply with the mandate of the NFSA and the 2024 directions of the Supreme Court to include more people in the free rations scheme; and
- (c): the estimated increase in beneficiary planned for the current financial year?

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 119 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 10.02.2026 IN THE RAJYA SABHA.

(a) to (c): The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) provides for coverage upto 75% of rural population and upto 50% of urban population for receiving free of cost foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), thus covering about 67% of the bottom population which at Census 2011 comes to 81.35 crore. Coverage under the Act is substantially high to ensure that all the vulnerable and needy sections of the society get its benefit.

At present, against the intended coverage of 81.35 crore, the States/UTs have identified 80.56 crore person, which is about 99.02% of the intended coverage i.e. 81.35 crore persons. Still, there is a scope of identification of 0.79 crore more beneficiaries under the NFSA.

It is the responsibility of the State Governments to ensure that, within the coverage determined for the State, all the eligible households, as per criteria prescribed by them, are included, and provided foodgrains as per their entitlements under the Act.

Sub-section 2 of Section 10 of the Act provides that the State Government shall update the list of eligible households, within the number of persons determined under section 9 for the rural and urban areas, in accordance with the guidelines framed under sub-section (1). In this regard, the Central Government has issued advisories, from time to time, to all the States/Union Territories to identify all eligible and poor persons/ households including vulnerable Sections of the Society for inclusion under the Act. States undertake updation of their beneficiary database so that ineligible ration cards get deleted and better targeting of rightful beneficiaries is ensured. The process of removing ineligible beneficiaries and adding eligible beneficiaries is continuous ongoing process, ensuring that the beneficiary database remains dynamic, updated, and accurate.

The Central Government, in coordination with States/UTs, has undertaken a comprehensive initiative for Rightful Targeting using advanced data analytics and monitoring through the Rightful Targeting Dashboard. The Dashboard has been developed as a centralized monitoring tool based on defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to identify potential discrepancies in beneficiary records. The major KPIs include - beneficiaries in Silent Ration Cards (No ration drawal for more than 6 months), duplicate Beneficiaries identified through Aadhaar and demographic matching, deceased Beneficiaries identified through Aadhaar status verification, beneficiaries aged above 100 years, ration cards with single member below 18 years, beneficiaries identified as Directors/Partners in registered firms through MCA database, beneficiaries identified with higher landholding through PM-KISAN data, beneficiaries with income above State Criteria or ₹6 lakh as per CBDT records, beneficiaries owning four-wheeler vehicles as per VAHAN

database, beneficiaries with GST turnover above ₹25 lakh as per GSTN/CBIC records. Since May 2025, States/UTs have been regularly undertaking this verification exercise, resulting in the deletion of 2.18 crore ineligible beneficiaries. This has created scope for identification of new eligible beneficiaries for coverage under the Act.
