

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1957
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH MARCH, 2026

IDENTIFICATION AND COVERAGE OF BPL BENEFICIARIES FOR RATION CARDS

1957 SHRI SANT BALBIR SINGH:

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

- (a): the steps Government has taken to ensure that all eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and individuals are identified and issued valid ration cards under the National Food Security Act;
- (b): whether any recent survey or verification drive has been conducted to update the BPL list to include newly eligible households, especially migrants, tribal communities, and urban poor; and
- (c): the total number of BPL households currently covered under the Public Distribution System (PDS), and how it compares with the estimated number of Eligible beneficiaries?

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

(a) to (c): Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is now governed as per the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), which is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. The responsibility for identification of beneficiaries, within the coverage determined for the State/UT and issuance of their ration cards rest with the concerned States/UTs.

Identification of beneficiaries under the Act is under two categories- households covered under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) to the extent specified by the Central Government and the remaining households as priority households to be identified by the State Governments/ Union Territories (UT) Administrations as per criteria evolved by them, within the coverage determined for the State/UT. There is no Below Poverty Line (BPL) category under the Act.

The Central Government has issued advisories to all the States/Union Territories from time to time to identify all eligible and poor persons/ households including vulnerable Sections of the Society for inclusion under the NFSA. States undertake updation of their beneficiary database so that ineligible ration cards get deleted and better targeting of rightful beneficiaries is ensured. Thus, deletion of ineligible beneficiaries and addition of eligible beneficiaries under the Act is a continuous process.

At present against the intended coverage of 81.35 crore persons, 79.40 crore beneficiaries are covered for getting free-of-cost foodgrains under the Act.
