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

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.43
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6TH DECEMBER, 2023

PURCHASE OF HARDWARE UNDER SMART PDS SCHEME

†*43. SHRIMATI DELKAR KALABEN MOHANBHAI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to replace the outdated computers/systems in the operational supply chain systems in States/UTs to adopt Integrated Supply Chain System for assured supply of ration under the One Nation One Ration Card scheme (ONORC);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount of funds in percentage set aside for purchase of hardware under the Smart PDS scheme;

(d) whether any shortcomings are being observed in the already existing schemes meant for effecting reforms in PDS; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND TEXTILES
(SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 43 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 06.12.2023 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a), (b) & (c): As a result of the end-to-end computerisation of Public Distribution System (PDS) operations in all States/UTs there has been significant progress achieved at the national level in terms of 100% digitization of ration cards, online allocation modules for generation of monthly foodgrain allocation orders up to the Fair Price Shops (FPS), installation of electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices, computerisation of supply chain management, online grievance redressal systems and initiation of transparency portals. Backed by the sustained technological progress, the Department had implemented One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) plan in August 2019 with 4 states and by the end of June 2022 ONORC was operational across all 36 States/UTs of the country. Since its inception around 124 Crore portability transactions have been recorded under the ONORC plan, which includes both inter-State and intra-State transactions ensuring the food security of around 80 Crore National Food Security Act 2013 (NFSA) beneficiaries in the country.

To give further impetus to the technology-driven PDS reforms and bring in more homogeneity a need was felt to operationalise a new scheme to ensure continuous support to all States/UT for strengthening technology components (server infrastructure, software) and technical capacities for sustaining & institutionalising the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) plan.

This Department is implementing the new Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) – "Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System (SMART-PDS)" for the development/implementation of advanced integrated supply chain software in States/UTs. Under this scheme, provisions have been made to replace existing servers/data centres by leveraging cloud infrastructure.

The scheme also has provision to continue the support of various application modules, portals, dashboards, integration with other ministries/departments, etc. developed under earlier end-to-end Computerization and Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS) schemes. This also includes the continuation of Data Centre Services procured under IMPDS covering Central System and PDS applications of State/UTs.

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The scheme envisages not only introducing the major technological reforms but also strengthening the technology-driven infrastructure in the Public Distribution System (PDS) for transformative change in the entire PDS ecosystem. The scheme is to be implemented in collaboration with all States/UTs, with a total cost of Rs. 349.9 Crore for a period of 3 years from 2023-24 to 2025-26.

The SMART-PDS offers a software suite along with advanced features and functionalities for States / UTs to leverage future-ready IT Tools for enabling the modernization of Supply Chain Management at their level.

SMART-PDS intends to continue to sustain the systematic information technology-led reforms brought in the functioning of Public Distribution System (PDS) operations by overcoming the State level of technological limitations with respect to Server, Software & Technical Manpower, leveraging cloud infrastructure and institutionalizing an integrated Central System covering all PDS related operations across the country.

(d) & (e): Major components of earlier schemes have been implemented across all States/UTs but going forward, in order to have homogeneity and more efficient systems, a uniform application shall be developed under SMART-PDS to integrate the entire PDS ecosystem for seamless operability and data flow.

Target areas for improvement include:

- Implementation of robust IT systems for improving the efficiency of PDS operations
- Reducing infrastructure & maintenance costs by developing uniform PDS applications and deployment in a single centralized IT system
- Ensuring high data consistency amongst various systems

By creating ICT-enabled system under SMART-PDS, it has been planned to improve efficiency of public delivery, enhance reach to beneficiaries and timely deliver the public services in a more transparent manner. These approaches attempt to improve delivery through (a) improving the quality of information, (b) reducing complexity or (c) making access more convenient and simpler.

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