

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.447
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27TH NOVEMBER, 2024

DIFFICULTIES FACED BY RATION CARD HOLDERS

†447 SHRI IMRAN MASOOD:

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 increase the number of ration card holders in urban and rural areas;
- (b) whether the Government is aware of the fact that even after applying for ration card by very needy applicant, the cards are not being made for one or two years;
- (c) whether the Government intends to have continuous monitoring of the Public Distribution System by public representatives; and
- (d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be done and if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(a): The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) provides for coverage upto 75% of rural population and upto 50% of urban population for receiving highly subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), thus covering about two-thirds of the total 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. Further, against the intended coverage of 81.35 crore, the States/UTs have identified only 80.67 crore person. Still, there is a scope of identification of 0.68 crore more beneficiaries under the NFSA.

Section 9 of the Act provides that the total number of persons to be covered in rural and urban areas of the State shall be calculated on the basis of the population estimates as per the Census of which the relevant figures have been published. Therefore, any revision in coverage shall be possible only after the relevant data of next population Census is published.

(b): Under the joint responsibility of the Central and State Government, the responsibility for identification of beneficiaries and issuance of their ration cards rests with the concerned State Government. The Central Government issues 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 are undertaking updation of their beneficiary database so that bogus 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.

(c) & (d): The NFSA provides for periodic social audits on the functioning of fair price shops, Targeted Public Distribution System and other welfare schemes, through local authority, or any other authority or body, as may be authorized by the State Government. The Central Government may also conduct or cause to be conducted social audit through independent agencies having experience in conduct of such audits. The Act defines "social audit" as the process in which people collectively monitor and evaluate the planning and implementation of a programme or scheme. Thus, the Act contains necessary provisions for monitoring of schemes by the people or community.
