

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2077
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12TH MARCH, 2025

**UNINTERRUPTED DISTRIBUTION OF RATIONS TO PUBLIC
DURING STRIKE PERIOD**

2077. SHRI RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is taking any steps to ensure the uninterrupted distribution of rations to the public keeping in view the ongoing strike by ration suppliers and the discontinuation of E-PoS services and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government will expedite the clearance of arrears owed to ration suppliers, which amount to over 100 crore rupees, to resolve the current strike and avoid further disruptions and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the measures taken by Government to address the ongoing technical issues with the E-PoS system that have been hindering smooth ration distribution particularly due to server limitations; and
- (d) whether the Government is considering revising the wage package or providing additional support to ration suppliers/traders to address their demands and avoid further strikes and if so, the details thereof?

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

(a): At present, nearly 5.41 Lakh (99.6%) out of total 5.43 Lakh Fair Price Shops (FPSs) in the country have been automated by installing ePoS devices for the distribution of foodgrains in a transparent manner (electronically) through biometric/ Aadhaar authentication of beneficiaries. There is no ongoing strike by ration suppliers reported to this Department.

(b): The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) **under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)** is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. The operational responsibility, including issuance of licenses to Fair Price Shops (FPSs), supervision and monitoring of the functioning of Fair Price Shops, etc., rest with the concerned State/UT Government. As per sub-clause (7) of clause 9 of the TPDS (Control) Order, 2015, the State Government shall fix an amount as the fair price shop owner's margin, which shall be periodically reviewed to ensure sustained viability of the fair price shop operations.

The Central Government has a limited role in determining the actual rate of fair price shop dealers' margin/ commission/ honorarium, etc. The Central Government only provides the assistance to States/UTs for meeting the expenditure towards intra-State movement & handling of foodgrains and fair price shop dealers' margin under the NFSA, in accordance with the provisions of Food Security (Assistance to State Governments) Rules, 2015, which inter-alia provides for norms of expenditure and pattern of central sharing. In order to ensure the viability of Fair Price Shops, the norms of FPS Dealers' margin were enhanced w.e.f. April 2022, as per the details given below:

Category of States/UTs	Components of FPS dealers' margin	Pre-revised norms (Rate in rupees per quintal)	Revised norms (Rate in rupee per quintal)	Central share (in percentage)
General Category	Basic margin	70	90	50
	Additional margin	17	21	
Special category	Basic margin	143	180	75
	Additional margin	17	26	

However, State Governments are free to fix the actual rates, which can be higher than the norms specified in the rules. Central assistance will be limited to the rates specified in the Rules or the actual average rates for the State as a whole, at which the expenditure was actually incurred by the State Government, whichever is lower.

(c): All States/UTs have been advised that no genuine beneficiary/household shall be deleted from the list of eligible ration cards/ beneficiaries and shall not be denied their entitled quota of foodgrains under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) only for want of Aadhaar number or only on the ground of not possessing an Aadhaar number, failure of biometric authentication due to network/ connectivity/ linking issues or any other technical reasons etc.

(d): As per sub-clause (9) of Clause 9 of the TPDS (Control) Order 2015, the State Government shall allow sale of commodities other than the foodgrains distributed under the TPDS at the fair price shops to improve the viability of the fair price shop operations.

To improve the financial viability of FPSs, Government of India has requested all State/UT Governments to take up initiatives through FPSs such as providing Common Service Centre (CSC) services, Banking services through tie-up with banks/ corporate Banking Correspondents, Banking and citizen-centric services of India Post Payment Bank (IPPB), Retail selling of small (5kg) LPG cylinders, Sale of other commodities/ general store items etc.

Further, a Jan Poshan Kendra pilot study is being conducted to improve viability of 60 FPSs across 4 cities, i.e. Hyderabad, Ghaziabad, Jaipur and Ahmedabad. The Government of India has undertaken this pilot study to enhance the financial viability of FPS dealers while focusing on improving nutritional outcomes of the beneficiaries.”
