

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2268
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12TH MARCH, 2025

SUBSIDIZED FOODGRAINS UNDER PDS

2268. SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:

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

- (a) the details of the steps being taken by the Government to address the increasing concerns regarding the quality and availability of subsidized foodgrains under the Public Distribution System (PDS) especially in rural and remote areas;
- (b) whether any measures has been taken and implemented by the Government to regulate market prices and prevent exploitation of consumers in the current economic climate in view of rise in consumer grievances regarding unfair pricing and hoarding of essential commodities and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the current status of the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme and its impact on migrant workers, particularly in ensuring access to foodgrains and other essential services in the wake of the pandemic and economic disruptions?

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

(a): The Department has formulated and issued a Quality Control Manual, to uniformly maintain the quality standards of foodgrains from procurement to its distribution to the eligible beneficiaries through various social security programmes of GoI.

In addition, a State Level Committee has been constituted in each State for monitoring and coordinating on quality related matters in respect to central pool food grains. Further, Quality Management System (QMS) portal has been implemented in FCI and the Department under which all quality control/inspection related activities are digitised leading to greater reliability and accuracy of data.

Further, the Public Distribution System is governed as per the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013. The Act provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population, which at Census 2011 comes to 81.35 crore persons. Government of India is distributing free of cost ration under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojan (PMGKAY) to entitled beneficiaries regularly through more than 5.46 lakh Fair Price Shops.

(b): The Department of Food and Public Distribution closely monitors international and domestic process as well as price trends of edible oils, wheat, rice and other essential commodities in weekly meetings. Further, the Government of India sells foodgrains (wheat and rice) beyond the Public Distribution System (PDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) requirements, through open sale under Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic). This helps increase the availability of foodgrains in the market, control inflation, ensure food security and make foodgrains more affordable for general population.

In addition to this, Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice were also launched on 06.11.2023 and 06.02.2024 respectively with a view to provide atta and rice to general consumers at subsidized rates.

In addition, for wheat, stock limit restrictions have also been imposed to avoid hoarding and to control retail prices in domestic market.

(c): The nation-wide portability of ration cards has been enabled in all 36 States/UTs (across the country) under One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) plan, which ensures the food security of more than 80 Crore PMGKAY beneficiaries in the country. ONORC plan is proving to be very beneficial to the beneficiaries who frequently change their place of dwelling in search of temporary employments, migrant labours, internally displaced persons (IDPs) etc. Under the plan, the beneficiaries are empowered to get their entitled foodgrain from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice, anywhere in the country by using their existing ration card with biometric authentication on an electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) device. The family back home can also lift the part of the PMGKAY foodgrains in the home State/UT on the same ration card.
