

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

**LOK SABHA**  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3015  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2025**

**CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING PDS**

3015. SHRI S JAGATHRATCHAKAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the challenges faced by marginalized communities in accessing the Public Distribution System (PDS) including exclusion due to biometric verification issues and delays in the issuance of ration cards and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the steps being taken to address unnecessary documentation requirements for PDS enrollment which are not mandated under the National Food Security Act, 2013 or the PDS Control Order, 2015;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any audit or review of the functioning of fair price shops including the under-distribution of foodgrains and exploitation by middlemen during the ration card application process and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the measures being planned to improve the digital accessibility of PDS services while ensuring that marginalized communities without digital literacy or resources can access their entitlements?

**A N S W E R**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS,  
FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION  
(SHRIMATI NIMUBEN JAYANTIBHAI BAMBHANIYA)

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**(a) to (b):** Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) under National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains upto the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India (FCI). The operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/ UTs, identification of eligible beneficiaries, issuance of ration cards to them, distribution of foodgrains to eligible beneficiaries under TPDS, issuance of license to Fair Price Shop dealers, supervision over and monitoring of functioning of FPSs etc. rest with the concerned State/ UT Governments. All State/UT Governments have been advised to cover maximum eligible persons up to the respective NFSA ceiling limits to ensure that maximum eligible beneficiaries get the benefit of NFSA foodgrains as per the coverage limit mandated under the NFSA.

(c): Section 28 of NFSA, 2013 and Clause 12 of TPDS (Control) Order, 2015 inter-alia provide that every local authority, or any other authority or body, as may be authorised by the State Government, shall conduct or cause to be conducted, periodic social audits on the functioning of TPDS, and cause to publicise its findings and take necessary action, in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.

**(d):** As part of the technology driven Public Distribution System (PDS) reforms, with the aim to improve the efficiency and reduce leakages in the PDS, ration cards/beneficiaries database have been completely digitized (100%) in all States/UTs. Further, nearly 5.41 Lakh (99.6%) out of total 5.43 Lakh Fair Price Shops (FPSs) in the country have been automated by installing e-PoS devices for the distribution of foodgrains in a transparent manner (electronically) through biometric/Aadhaar authentication of beneficiaries. The process of distributing foodgrains through e-PoS devices is very simple and does not require any special digital literacy among beneficiaries to lift their entitled foodgrains through electronic transactions. Further, States/ UTs are advised to ensure that e-PoS printed transaction receipts are provided to all beneficiaries in local language, besides SMS are sent on their registered mobile numbers to ensure complete transparency in distribution process.

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