

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5233
TO BE ANSWERED ON 2ND APRIL, 2025

FREE RATION DISTRIBUTION

†5233. SMT. LOVELY ANAND:

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

- (a) the main objective of the Prime Minister's scheme of free ration distribution at ration shops;
- (b) the various measures taken to ensure its uniform implementation in rural and urban areas;
- (c) whether the said scheme is likely to have any impact on farmers and the food production system;
- (d) the various monitoring mechanisms developed to check corruption in the distribution process and ensure smooth delivery of ration to the beneficiaries therein; and
- (e) the strategy being adopted by the Government to make the said scheme sustainable in the future along with 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) to (e): The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was launched with the specific purpose of ameliorating the hardships faced by the poor and needy due to economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak in the country. Under the PMGKAY, the beneficiaries i.e. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH) were entitled to receive additional 5 kilogram of foodgrains per person per month, in addition to regular allocation during the Covid-19. A total quantity of approx. 1118 LMT foodgrains was allocated under PMGKAY (Phase I-VII) for the period of 28 months with a total planned financial outlay of about Rs. 3.91 lakh crore.

The Central Government, in order to remove the financial burden of the poor beneficiaries and to ensure nationwide uniformity and effective implementation of the programme for support of the poor, food grains free of cost were provided to AAY households and PHH beneficiaries, beginning from 1st January 2023 under the PMGKAY. The period of distribution of free of cost foodgrains has been further extended for a period of five years with effect from 1st January, 2024, with an estimated financial outlay of Rs. 11.80 lakh crore totally to be borne by Central Government.

The Central Government, for ensuring the regular supply of foodgrains to persons belonging to eligible households under the NFSA, allocate the required quantity of foodgrains to the State Governments from the central pool, under the Targeted Public Distribution System. The foodgrains stock in the central pool are procured by the Central Government and the State Governments from the farmers through minimum support price operations.

The National Food Security Act, 2013 provides for constitution/designation of State Food Commission for the purpose of monitoring and review of implementation of the Act in relation to the State.

In order to ensure transparency and accountability in Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), the Act 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. In addition to this, the Act provides for constitution of Vigilance Committees at the State, District, Block and fair price shop levels for ensuring transparency and proper functioning of the Targeted Public Distribution System and accountability of the functionaries in the system.

Provision of free food grains shall mitigate any financial hardship of the affected strata of society in a sustainable manner and ensure long term pricing strategy with zero cost to the beneficiaries which is vital for effective penetration of the Public Distribution System.
