

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

**LOK SABHA**  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3009  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2026**

**COVERAGE CRITERIA OF PDS**

**3009. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL:**

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

- (a): whether the Government considering revising the coverage criteria of the Public Distribution System (PDS) to include those who cannot afford a nutritious diet but currently fall outside the existing income-based cut-offs;
- (b): if so, whether there are plans to diversify the offerings under the PDS to include more nutrient-dense options like millets and seafood and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c): the details of the coordination has been made with bodies like NITI Aayog to incorporate food affordability indices (such as the Thali Index) into national food targeting frameworks; and
- (d): the status of the "One Nation, One Ration Card" scheme in ensuring seamless access to PDS entitlements for migrant workers across the country?

**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 (c): The Public Distribution System is now governed as per the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA). The Act being successfully implemented in all the States/UTs, aims to supplement the food requirements of upto 75% of the rural and upto 50% of the urban population which at Census 2011 comes to 81.35 crore beneficiaries. The Coverage under the Act is substantially high to ensure that all the vulnerable and needy sections of the society get its benefit.

The Act provides that the State Government shall, within the ceiling of beneficiaries determined for the State, identify the households to be covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana to the extent specified by the Central Government, in accordance with the guidelines applicable to the said scheme and the remaining households as priority households to be covered under the Targeted Public Distribution System, in accordance with such guidelines evolved by the State Government itself.

The States/UTs have identified only 79.40 crore persons, against the intended coverage of 81.35 crore persons. Still, there is a scope for identification of 1.95 crore more beneficiaries, by the States/UTs, under the NFSA

Under the Act, free of cost foodgrains are being distributed to eligible beneficiaries as per their entitlement. The term "foodgrains" is defined as rice, wheat or coarse grains or any combination

thereof conforming to such quality norms as may be determined, by order, by the Central Government from time to time. Therefore, the millets are already part of PDS. At present, no proposal to include more commodities under the Act, is under consideration of the Government.

To improve the level of nutrition, an advisory has been issued to all the States/UTs to procure millets and distribute them to beneficiaries as per local consumption preferences and as per guidelines issued by the Central Government from time to time.

(d): The nationwide portability of ration cards is popularly known as One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) feature. Through this technology driven reform, PMGKAY beneficiaries are empowered to lift their entitled foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice, anywhere in the country, by using their same 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. Currently, ONORC feature is enabled in all 36 States/UTs, across the country, covering almost 100% PMGKAY beneficiaries (including migrant workers).

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