

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 857
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH FEBRUARY, 2026

PROGRESS OF DIGITALIZATION OF PDS

857. SHRI MALAIYARASAN D:

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

- (a): the details of progress of digitalization efforts under the Public Distribution System (PDS) across States and Union Territories;
- (b): the details of Fair Price Shops (FPS) that have been equipped with digital infrastructure for automated operations especially in kallakurichi Lok Sabha Constituency;
- (c): the main objectives of digitalizing the PDS and the manner in which the digitalization impacted the efficiency and transparency of the distribution process;
- (d): whether there has been any measurable reduction in pilferage and leakages of PDS resources since the introduction of digital systems and if so, the details thereof;
- (e): the details and the current status of Aadhaar-based authentication and e-Point of Sale (e POS) machines at FPSs for beneficiary verification;
- (f): the details of the challenges that have been encountered in implementing digital solutions under the PDS, particularly in remote or rural areas; and
- (g): whether the Government has taken steps to improve internet connectivity in rural regions to support uninterrupted digital PDS operations especially in Kallakurichi Lok Sabha Constituency 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): Under the ongoing reforms in the Public Distribution System (PDS), the ration card and beneficiary database has been completely digitised across all States and Union Territories. As on date, 5.50 lakh Fair Price Shops (FPSs), constituting nearly 99.8% of the total 5.51 lakh FPSs in the country have been automated through the installation of electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices for distribution of foodgrains using Aadhaar-based biometric authentication. Further, 99.2% of beneficiaries have been Aadhaar-seeded, and 98.5% of foodgrain distribution is being carried out through digital authentication modes, including Aadhaar biometric and iris authentication.

(b): In the Kallakurichi Lok Sabha Constituency, there are 766 Fair Price Shops (FPSs). All these FPSs have been equipped with ePoS devices, and 758 FPSs are presently fully online and operational, enabling automated and authenticated distribution of foodgrains.

(c): The primary objectives of digitising the Public Distribution System are to enhance efficiency and transparency ensure rightful targeting of beneficiaries, and address challenges such as leakages and diversion of foodgrains.

As an outcome of technology-driven reforms in the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) since 2013—including digitisation of ration cards and beneficiary databases, Aadhaar seeding, de-duplication, and identification of duplicate, ineligible, deceased and permanently migrated beneficiaries—all States and Union Territories have collectively weeded out 6.77 crore ration cards during the period from 2013 to 2025, thereby strengthening the integrity and effectiveness of the system and making space for the waitlisted beneficiaries under NFSA.

d): The introduction of digital systems under PDS has resulted in a measurable reduction in pilferage and leakages. The digitisation initiatives, particularly Aadhaar seeding, beneficiary de-duplication, and ePoS-based authentication at FPSs, have significantly reduced the scope for diversion and inclusion of ineligible beneficiaries. The removal of 6.77 crore duplicate and ineligible ration cards between 2013 and 2025 is a key indicator of improved targeting and reduced leakages in the system.

(e): As on date, 5.50 lakh FPSs (99.8%) out of a total of 5.51 lakh FPSs across the country have been automated through the installation of ePoS devices for beneficiary verification and foodgrain distribution. Further, 99.2% of beneficiaries are Aadhaar-seeded, and 98.5% of distribution transactions are being authenticated through digital modes, including Aadhaar biometric and iris authentication.

(f) & (g): To address network and internet related challenges, the Department of Telecommunications has been requested to take necessary measures to resolve internet and connectivity-related issues, especially in remote and shadow network areas.

Further, the PDS framework provides multiple safeguards to ensure uninterrupted delivery of foodgrains. Beneficiaries are empowered to lift their entitled foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop having an operational ePoS device, thereby mitigating location-specific connectivity issues. Additionally, ePoS devices are enabled with offline functionality, allowing transactions to be carried out in areas with limited or no internet connectivity. Such devices are required to periodically connect to a network-enabled area to synchronise offline transaction data with the central PDS system.

It is ensured that no beneficiary is denied his or her entitled foodgrains on account of connectivity issues, including in areas such as the Kallakurichi Lok Sabha Constituency.
