

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

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 242
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6TH AUGUST, 2025

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF PDS

***242. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL:**

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

- (a): the measures being taken by the Government to ensure efficient functioning of the Public Distribution System including timely distribution of foodgrains and avoidance of pilferage;
- (b): the Government's assessment of the efficiency of the PDS in terms of reaching the beneficiaries along with the steps being taken to improve its reach and impact;
- (c): the details of the major issues with the operational efficiency of PDS in terms of supply chain, warehousing and distribution networks;
- (d): the details of the current subsidy rate on foodgrains under the PDS;
- (e): the details of the steps being taken by the Government to ensure the effective implementation of subsidies and price control measures on essential commodities to protect consumers from price volatility and exploitation;
- (f): the measures being taken by the Government to ensure that the PDS supports the rural economy and the impact of the PDS on the rural economy, farmers, agricultural labourers and small-scale businesses; and
- (h): the details of Government's plan to further strengthen the PDS?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND
MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

(a) to (h): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (h) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. *242 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 06.08.2025 IN THE LOK SABHA REGARDING.

(a): As part of the technology driven Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) reforms, with the aim to improve the transparency and accountability in the TPDS, ration cards/beneficiaries database have been completely digitized (100%) in all States/UTs. The transparency portal and online grievance redressal facility/Toll-free number have been implemented in all States/UTs. Also, online allocation has been implemented in all States/UTs and supply chain has been computerized in 31 States/UTs (except UTs of Chandigarh, Puducherry and Urban area of Dadra & Nagar Haveli which have adopted DBT Cash Transfer scheme). Further, for better tracking of foodgrains distribution, nearly 5.41 Lakh (99.6%) out of total 5.43 Lakh Fair Price Shops (FPSs) in the country have been automated by installing ePoS devices for the distribution of foodgrains in a transparent manner (electronically) through biometric/ Aadhaar authentication of beneficiaries.

Further, for transparency and proper functioning of the Targeted Public Distribution System and accountability of the functionaries in such system, every State Government sets up Vigilance Committees as specified in the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001, made under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, as amended from time to time, at the State, District, Block and Fair Price shop levels. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the concerned state Govt. to maintain a robust public distribution system to ensure smooth distribution of food grains to the targeted beneficiaries and to avoid any diversion of subsidized food grains to open market.

Helpline number 1967/1800-State series number is operational in all the States/ UTs for contacting and redressal of the complaints in Public Distribution System and filing any type of complaints by the intended beneficiaries. As and when complaints, including pilferage of NFSA foodgrains, are received in this Department from any source, they are sent to State/ UT Governments concerned for inquiry and appropriate action.

(b): This Department engaged Monitoring Institutions (MIs) of repute to undertake concurrent evaluation of the implementation of National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) in different States/UTs for Phase-I (2018-20) and Phase-II (2020-23). Reports submitted by the MIs are available in public domain at https://nfsa.gov.in/portal/Concurrent_Evaluation.

(c): The supply chain and logistics for the Public Distribution System (PDS) involve multiple stages and processes to ensure the smooth distribution of foodgrains to the intended beneficiaries. The procurement and distribution processes in the PDS involve a coordinated effort between farmers, government agencies, storage facilities, transporters, and Fair Price Shops. Supply Chain Management software/application has been developed and implemented in the most of the States/UTs to electronically perform entire supply operations for improving efficiency and transparency. A unified application is being developed under SMART PDS (Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System) that integrates all facets of PDS operations from Procurement, Supply chain & Allocation to Distribution of food grains along with management Ration Card databases across States & UTs. The system is being developed by NIC and is in various stages of deployment across States & UTs

(d): The current Economic Cost of the foodgrains are Wheat - Rs.2980.06 per qtl. and Rice - Rs.4173.34 per qtl. However, Government of India is providing free of cost foodgrains to the beneficiaries under PMGKAY.

(e): The Government of India distributes foodgrains to the beneficiaries under PMGKAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana), Other welfare schemes, Defence, Additional allocations in case of natural calamity etc. In addition, Government of India sells surplus food grains (Wheat & Rice), beyond the public Distribution System (PDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) requirements, through open sale under Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic) (OMSS(D)). This helps in increasing the availability of foodgrains in the market, control inflation, ensure food security and make foodgrains more affordable for the general population. In addition, Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice were launched, with a view to provide atta (wheat flour) and rice to general consumers at subsidized rates under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) (OMSS(D)) policy.

The Essential Commodities Act, (EC Act), 1955 and the Prevention of Black marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, (PBMMSSEC Act), 1980 provide the legislative and administrative foundations to the Government to regulate prices, production, supply, distribution etc. of essential commodities for maintaining or increasing their supplies and for securing their equitable distribution and availability at fair prices. In order to prevent hoarding and unscrupulous speculation of essential commodities, stock limits are imposed under the EC Act. Directives are issued to the States and UTs to enforce compliance with the stock limits by stockholding entities, and follow-up meetings are held with the States/UTs to review the status of implementation.

The PBMMSSEC Act, 1980, is complementary to the EC Act, 1955. It is implemented through the State Governments/UT Administrations for preventing the illegal and unethical trade practices, profiteering, hoarding, and black-marketing of essential commodities etc. by ordering preventive detentions for six months of persons involved in such activities.

(f): NFSA covers upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and priority households (PHH). While AAY households, which constitute poorest of the poor are entitled to 35 kg of foodgrains per family per month, priority households are entitled to 5 kg per person per month. The Government of India, to remove the

financial burden of the poor beneficiaries (including farmers, agricultural labourers, etc.) and to ensure nationwide uniformity and effective implementation of the Act, is providing food grains free of cost to Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH) beneficiaries. Many Fair Price Shops (FPS) are run by rural self-help groups, cooperatives, and women self-help groups. PDS operations are also generating employment for rural population by engaging them into loading, unloading, packaging, and transport of grains. Centralised procurement of food grains (wheat, rice, coarse grains) at MSP (Minimum Support Price) assured market rate to farmers and also helped in rural economy. Rural procurement centres/mandis, storage godowns, silos, etc established closer to villages also contribute into rural economy. Procurement of locally grown millets and distribution through PDS is also major contributor to the rural economy. Now, One Nation One Ration Card facility available across the country which enables rural labourers /migrant workers to avail ration from any Fair Price Shop.

(h): The scheme “Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System” (SMART-PDS)” was launched to sustain the Information Technology-led Reforms to be brought in the functioning of Public Distribution System (PDS) Operations by overcoming the state level technological limitations of PDS operations in all States/UTs in respect of IT Hardware, Software, Technical Manpower and to institutionalize an integrated central system covering all PDS related operations across all States/UTs. The Department has also launched Mera Ration App in August 2024 to enhance transparency and accessibility in the Public Distribution System (PDS). The mobile empowered beneficiaries to access family and ration details, grievance redressal, mobile ration card download, and FPS rating features.

The Department also conducted extensive data analytics of ration card databases across all States/UTs, detecting discrepancies such as duplicate ration cards, silent cards, members aged over 100 years, single-member households with members below 18 years, and Aadhaar records marked as ‘Deceased,’ ‘Suspended,’ ‘Cancelled,’ or ‘Invalid.’ Such beneficiaries were flagged to States and they were asked to do further verification of such members of ration cards. Accordingly, out of total of 2.94 Cr cases flagged, approx. 1.24 Cr such flagged cases were deleted by States & UTs. This improved targeting of beneficiaries, enabling inclusion of more eligible persons under PMGKAY within NFSA ceilings.

Two digital initiatives have also been launched—**Anna Sahayata** and **Anna Mitra**—to enhance PDS efficiency.

- **Anna Sahayata:** An advanced grievance redressal system under NFSA using WhatsApp and IVRS, featuring grievance registration, a three-tier escalation matrix, and real-time tracking, now operational across all States/UTs.
- **Anna Mitra:** A mobile app for PDS field functionaries offering secure access to operational data, stock management, beneficiary records, inspection tools, and compliance reporting from district to FPS level. It caters to FPS dealers, Food supply inspectors and District Food Supply Officer.

Key benefits include streamlined operations, reduced manual paperwork, improved stock visibility, and data-driven decision-making.
