

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:45

ANSWERED ON:23.11.2005

IDENTIFICATION OF POOR

Rana Shri Kashi Ram;Thummar Shri Virjibhai

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any confusion in the collection of information regarding the number of poor people in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the process adopted by the Government to collect data regarding the poor people;
- (d) the criteria to check the accuracy of these data; and
- (e) the reasons behind not adhering to this criteria?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V.RAJASEKHARAN)

(a): No Sir.

(b): Does not arise.

(c): The data collected through the consumer expenditure surveys of NSSO which are used by the Government to estimate the number of poor people in the country, are collected through a nationwide household (sample) survey in the following way. A random sample of villages, spread over all States and Union Territories, is drawn from the list of all Census villages, and a random sample of urban blocks is similarly drawn from a list of urban geographical areas of the country called UFS blocks which the NSSO itself prepares and updates regularly. Trained investigators from the field staff of NSSO visit the sample villages and urban blocks and carry out a process of random selection to select the households or enterprises to be ultimately surveyed. Next they visit each selected household and, by interviewing one or more household members, collect data on quantity and value of food and non-food items consumed by the household during a specified reference period. Each household in India, leaving out a few disturbed or inaccessible areas, has a chance of being selected for interview in the survey. The monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) of each sample household is calculated as its consumer expenditure during a month divided by the number of household members. From the data supplied by the sample households, State-level and all-India estimates of the percentage of rural or urban households with MPCE within a particular range, say, Rs.500-Rs.650, is obtained by applying statistical methods to the numbers of sample households falling within that range in the selected villages or urban blocks. These statistical methods are based on accepted statistical principles and methodology drawn up by academicians and other experts in survey sampling. The survey report publishes the estimated numbers of persons belonging to households in different ranges or slabs of MPCE in rural and urban areas of different States and groups of States/ UTs. These numbers are used by the Government to determine the number of poor people in the country according to the suitable criteria. It may be noted that the NSS consumer expenditure surveys have no special method for collection of data on poor people. However, the scale of survey and the procedure of selection of households ensures that households from all economic levels are represented in the sample.

(d): Checks on accuracy of data are carried out at the field stage and also at the data processing stage. Field inspection aims to ensure that the information has been properly ascertained from capable informants and recorded correctly in the schedule of enquiry. Unusually large or small entries are investigated and retained only if confirmed by re- enquiry. Particular care is taken to see that the data are recorded in the proper units and the decimal points are properly placed and legible. Computer checks are applied in the processing stage to see that totals and sub-totals are correct, that all entries made in code are meaningful and mutually consistent. And that implicit prices paid for different articles are plausible and consistent with one another. Doubtful enquiries are again referred to the field. The data that remain after this cleaning process are tabulated to yield the estimates that are eventually published. It may be noted that the accuracy of the estimates generated by NSSO can never be cent per cent as they are based on sample survey data and not the entire universe of households.

(e): Does not arise as the criteria are always adhered to.