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## **C'GARH AMONG SIX STATES FOUND WITH EXCESS RATION CARDS**

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Chhattisgarh is among six States in the country where excess ration cards were distributed as per an evaluation study conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the Central Government has informed.

The final report of the study on functioning of 'Targetted Public Distribution System' (TPDS) in six selected states which was conducted in March 2014, was accepted in the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in November 2015, it stated.

Based on 2011 census and the family size estimates projected over 2015, the study has estimated the number of excess ration cards made in the six target States with the number of excess cards as follows— Bihar (33.92 lakh), Chhattisgarh (10.84 lakh), Karnataka ( 2.15 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (98.39 lakh), West Bengal (19.39 lakh) and Assam (not specified).

In Chhattisgarh, a total of 94,209 bogus/ineligible rations cards were deleted by the State Government during the last three years including the current year, it stated.

In terms of the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, dated August 31, 2001, the states and Union territories are to review the lists of BPL and AAY families every year for the purpose of deletion of ineligible families and inclusion of eligible families. The exercise of deletion of bogus/ineligible cards and inclusion of eligible families is a continuous process and State Governments are to periodically carry out the same.

The TPDS (Control) Order, 2015 notified on March 20, 2015 also calls for all the necessary action to be taken by states and Union Territories for review of list of beneficiaries and deletion of bogus /ineligible ration cards.

To curb leakages further, under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) inter alia, states and Union Territories have been asked to either do cash transfer of food subsidy under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) or install electronic Point of Sale Device (ePoS) at the Fair Price Shops (FPSs).

Notably, Chhattisgarh has achieved 100 per cent digitisation of the Public Distribution System (PDS) beneficiaries database.

There are 23 other States in the country which have also achieved 100 per cent digitisation of the PDS database, officials stated.

Moreover, the Chhattisgarh Government is now also preparing a plan to use Aadhaar cards to identify Public Distribution System (PDS) beneficiaries.

It has prepared a comprehensive action plan for ensuring total transparency in the preparation of ration cards besides evolving a mechanism for error-free identity of Public Distribution System (PDS) beneficiaries.

Under the action plan, the mobile, bank account and Aadhaar numbers of the beneficiaries are being collected.

Food, Civil Supply and Consumer Protection Minister Punnulal Mohle had stated earlier that the State Government has also made a provision of `4,700 crore for implementation of 'Chief Minister Food and Nutrition Security scheme' in the State Budget 2015-16.

The Government had made a provision of `1.75 crore in the form of extension of 'Core PDS' for its 'Meri Marzi Scheme.'

Chhattisgarh's Public Distribution System (PDS) model has gram panchayats, co-operative societies and women's self-help groups (SHGs) operating the fair price shops, officials stated.

About 90 per cent of the masses are covered under Food and Nutrition Security Act was implemented in 2013, officials stated.

Chhattisgarh's PDS under Antyodaya and Priority families schemes provides 35 kg foodgrains at `1 per kilogram. Since June 2014, single member category ration card-holders under destitute segment are provided 10 kg foodgrains free of cost.

Notably, Chhattisgarh State Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Punnulal Mohle had called upon the Central Government to computerise the ration shops under the Public Distribution System (PDS) while addressing the State Food Ministers' National Conference in New Delhi on July 7 this year.

He had urged the Central Government to provide two-kg 'Daal' (pulses) at `10 per kg to the Antyodaya and Priority and below poverty card-holders under the National Food Security Act .

Union Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Ramvilas Paswan and Union Agriculture Minister Radhamohan Singh were also present at the meeting.

Mohle said that the Central Government provided subsidised 'Daal' under the Public Distribution System till 2012 and later it was stopped.