

CITIZENS' CHARTER

1997

FOR THE TARGETTED PUBLIC
DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (TPDS)



DEPARTMENT OF FOOD CIVIL SUPPLIES

&

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

SHILLONG.

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P R E F A C E

The Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of Meghalaya is implementing the Targeted Public Distribution System in Meghalaya with effect from June, 1997, under which a monthly quota of foodgrains is supplied at subsidized rates to the targeted population. Details of TPDS such as authorities responsible for its effective implementation at State, District, Block and Fair Price Shops levels are given in the following pages. This booklet enumerates the rights the citizens have, to get information from different channels of the delivery system regarding their entitlements of foodgrains, quality and quantities of such foodgrains supplied to the fair price shops. This booklet also incorporates the rights of the citizens under the Right to Information Act, 2005, with reference to TPDS. It is hoped that the measures suggested in this booklet would result in effective, hassle free implementation of the TPDS by the State Government and enable the eligible citizens to get their entitlements under the TPDS.

CHAPTER 1

STREAMLINED FUNCTIONING OF TPDS FOR ENSURING FOOD SECURITY TO WEAKER SECTIONS OF SOCIETY

Citizens Charter

I. Charter of State Government:

The Government of Meghalaya views the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) as an important constituent of a strategy for ensuring food security of the targeted population by ensuring availability of monthly quota of foodgrains to them as per entitlement. The Government is committed to implement the TPDS to the best advantage of the beneficiaries with full transparency and efficiency of operations and accountability of authorities implementing it.

II. ELIGIBILITY

At present TPDS benefits the poorest of the poor identified families under the Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY) and other population living below the Poverty Line identified as such within the over all norms approved by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India. As regards people above the poverty, the benefits under TPDS are restricted as per instructions issued from time to time.

III. LISTS OF BPL FAMILIES AND IDENTIFICATION OF AAY FAMILIES.

The State Govt. has been given the responsibility to formulate suitable guidelines for issuing ration cards to eligible families living below the Poverty Line, including the AAY families, as per the norms approved by the Government, regarding the total estimated number of the targeted BPL families. The State Government and other authorized local representative bodies shall finalize the lists of beneficiaries belonging to BPL category, including the AAY families, drawn up by the designated authorities in respect of the area under their respective jurisdiction. Care will be taken to ensure that the upper limits prescribed on number of such families are not exceeded.

IV. ISSUE OF RATION CARDS:-

The criteria prescribing eligibility and procedure for issuance of ration cards will be widely publicized and made available to all citizens on demand. Receipt of application for ration card will be duly acknowledged. The acknowledgement will indicate the date on which the ration card can be collected, provided all the required information has been correctly given. The ration card holders will be suitably advised and guided regarding the Fair Price Shops at which they could register for obtaining supplies.

The names, designations, telephone numbers and addresses of officials, to whom grievances/complaints relating to delay or rejection of applications for ration cards could be addressed will be prominently displayed at the concerned office premises.

All grievances/complaints and other correspondence will be duly registered and acknowledged on the spot, if given in person, or within 7 days by post. Wherever possible, computerized information system will be introduced to ensure efficiency and effective follow up and disposal of grievances and complaints.

Issuance of BPL/AAY cards will be as per procedure prescribed and the total number of AAY/BPL cards shall not exceed the limit prescribed. Separate cards of distinctive colours will be issued to families belonging to the APL, BPL and AAY categories.

The State Government shall ensure periodical checking of ration cards to eliminate bogus ration cards and also take stern action against persons found guilty of misusing the TPDS benefits. A time limit for making any additions or deletions in the ration cards will be drawn up by the State Government as per the chart given below:

Item of work	Time Limit*	Authority to effect changes
1. Inclusion/Deletion of family/members (by representation to Area Rationing Office)	(i) Same day on presentation of ration cards with required proofs (wherever necessary) (ii) Within seven days if physical verification is necessary (for additions).	Deputy Commissioners / Sub-Divisional Officers within their respective Districts / Sub-Divisions.
2. Change in address within jurisdiction of the same FPS	Same day	-do-
3. Change in address including change in FPS	Seven working days	-do-
4. Issuance of surrender certificate on transfer of family to other city or otherwise	Two working days	-do-
5. Issuance of new ration card within the State (with surrender certificate)	Two working days	-do-
6. Issue of new ration cards in case of change of State (with surrender certificate).	Two weeks	-do-

* Indicative – State Government may fix the time limits as and when necessary.

V. SCALE OF ISSUE AND ISSUE PRICES:

The Central Government shall make foodgrains available to the State Governments for distribution under the TPDS at such scales and prices as decided by the Government from time to time. The quantities of foodgrains to be supplied per family and issue prices as decided by the State Government for distribution to the eligible consumer households would be made available/known to the public through various means, including display on internet websites. These shall be invariably displayed at all FPSs.

VI. DISTRIBUTION:

The procedure for distribution of foodgrains by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the State Governments or their nominated / designated agencies shall be publicized widely for knowledge of the general public.

The FCI shall ensure physical delivery of foodgrains of fair average quality to the State Government for distribution under the TPDS as per the allocations made by the Central Government within one week of the receipt of payments from the State Government. On getting the allocation of foodgrains from the Central Government, the State Government shall issue District/Sub-Divisional wise allocation orders authorizing them to draw foodgrains from the FCI and ensure delivery of the same to the Fair Price Shops. In addition to State and District offices of State Department of Food and Civil Supplies, the District/Sub-Divisional wise allocation shall also be published on the website of the State Govt. and those of the District/Sub-Divisions, if available. In the event of FCI not being able to deliver the foodgrains within a week, reasons for the same and the approximate time by which the foodgrains shall be delivered will be communicated to the State Government.

The distribution system would be made transparent. State Government shall make information available to the public about various storage points/godowns from where the foodgrains are lifted and sent to the FPS. This would include the godowns owned by State Civil Supplies Corporations or any other intermediaries/nominees/wholesalers. At each delivery point, samples of foodgrains meant for distribution under TPDS alongwith the quantity in stock shall be made available for scrutiny by any stakeholder (local

citizens and their representatives) Stakeholders should be provided with an opportunity to inspect the sample on an appointed day of the week. A time of two hours should be earmarked on that day for such inspections.

The District/Sub-Division Civil Supplies Office shall send copies of allocation orders to all the Fair Price Shops as well as to their respective Headmen and their Vigilance Committees and any other body nominated for monitoring the functioning of the Fair Price Shops. The details of allocation should be made available on the web-sites identified for the purpose (preferably at the District/Sub-Division level).

VII. QUALITY OF FOODGRAINS:

Joint sampling will be done by representatives of State Government and officials of FCI before issue of foodgrains from FCI godowns. Wherever any State Government is not able to send a representative for joint sampling, FCI may issue the foodgrains after observing the necessary formalities to avoid delay.

FCI shall issue to the State Government sealed samples of the stocks of foodgrains supplied to them (a sample will be retained by FCI Office/godown also for a period of two months from the date of its issue) for distribution under the TPDS at the time of dispatch. The State Government shall exercise necessary checks to ensure that full quantity lifted by them reaches their godowns and the fair price shops. They will also ensure that the stocks are not replaced by inferior quality stocks during storage, transit or at any other stage in the distribution chain.

VIII. FAIR PRICE SHOPS:

The TPDS functions through a network of fair price shops. The procedure for issue of licenses or authorization to the FPS for distribution of essential commodities under the PDS shall be clearly laid down by the State Government. The license will clearly indicate the period for which the license is valid. The State Government would also indicate the responsibilities and duties of the FPS owners which would inter-alia include (i) sale of essential commodities as per the entitlement of ration card holders at the retail issue price fixed by the concerned State Government under the TPDS and (ii) display of all information on a Notice Board at a prominent place in the shop regarding

(a) number of APL, BPL and AAY beneficiaries, (b) their entitlement of essential commodities, (c) scale of issue, (d) retail issue price (e) timings of opening and closing of the FPS, (f) stock of essential commodities received during the month, (g) opening and closing stock of essential commodities on each day, (h) the authority for redressal of grievances/lodging complaints with respect to quality and quantity of essential commodities under the TPDS and (i) time/day of the week when citizens can inspect the books/stocks. The list of APL, BPL and AAY cardholders should be available for scrutiny.

The fair price shop owner will have to maintain records of ration card holders, stock registers, issue or sale registers, etc. as may be prescribed by the State Government. It would be binding on the FPS owner to allow inspection of these documents by the Vigilance Committees or any local citizen as the case may be on a day/time (two hours) notified for this purpose once every week.

The Fair Price Shop owner will display samples of foodgrains being supplied by the shop. The FPS owner will not retain ration cards after supply of essential commodities and shall provide relevant extracts of the records maintained by him on payment of prescribed fee as required under the Right to information Act, 2005. In the event of any practical difficulties to give copies, etc, facilities for inspection of records/samples/documents etc. shall be provided on an appointed day(s)/time at least once a week.

IX. INSPECTION AND CHECKING:

The State Government shall ensure a proper system for monitoring of FPS and prescribe model sales records/registers, stock registers and ration card registers. The State Government shall ensure inspection of FPS not less than once in each month by designated authorities and also specify issues on which information would be collected by them. During the inspections, the quality and quantity of ration being supplied through FPS, smooth functioning of the FPS with reference to opening and closing time of the FPS, and dealings of the FPS owner/its workers with the TPDS beneficiaries will be checked.

X. CANCELLATION OF LICENSES OF FPS:

The State Government shall notify circumstances under which the license of a FPS can be cancelled and make available the information regarding the designated authorities for lodging any complaint against those erring FPS owners who violate the rules/procedures of the system.

A prompt and effective redressal mechanism shall also be laid down so that any shortcomings pointed out by citizens may be promptly resolved.

XI. VIGILANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

State Government shall constitute Vigilance Committees to periodically review functioning of the TPDS at FPS level, District/Block and State level with members from Government, Social organizations, consumer organizations, local bodies etc. viz.,

- (i) FPS level Vigilance Committees: A Vigilance Committee consisting of representatives of card holders (some of whom shall be women BPL/AAV beneficiaries), the Headmen within their localities, consumer activists and other social workers of repute shall be set up in each locality (in urban areas). In large locality with more than one FPS, more than one Vigilance Committee may be set up. The Chairman of the Vigilance Committee may be the Headman/Secretary of the local village, as the case may be.
- (ii) Block level Vigilance Committees: Block level Committees will comprise five-six card holders attached to the FPS, representatives of local bodies, social workers of the area, etc. The Block level Committee will cover FPSs in a Block and report to the District level Committee about functioning of FPSs and other related problems. The Chairman of the Vigilance Committee at Block Level may be the Block Development Officer of the Block or elected prominent person of the area.

- (iii) District Level Vigilance Committee: Each District level Committee, to be constituted by the concerned State Government will comprise about 10 members from different segments like beneficiary groups, social/consumer organizations, people's elected representatives and be headed by the Chairman of the Committee. The District level Vigilance Committee shall also be authorized to redress / solve the problems at his level to the maximum extent possible and, whenever it is not possible, he would refer the same with his recommendation to the State level Committee.
- (iv) State Level Committee: This Committee to be constituted by the State Government may consist of concerned Senior Level Officials from the Government, a few Members of Legislative Assemblies, Consumer Activists and Youth & Women's Organizations. The Committee may be chaired by the Minister in Charge of Food & Civil Supplies of the State Government and may include other Ministers of related Ministries such as Rural Development, Urban Development etc., as members in addition to the other members mentioned above. The Committee shall review quarterly the overall functioning of TPDS Scheme in the State, and difficulties being faced, if any, in smooth functioning of the Scheme in the State as a whole. The Committee/its members may also visit FPSs, and offices of Food & Civil Supplies Departments, meet beneficiaries of the Scheme and may recommend to the State Government corrective action for any problems in implementation of TPDS. If a decision on any issue is in jurisdiction of Central Government, the State level Committee may recommend corrective action to the Central Government.

The State Government shall implement a mechanism of grievances redressal for issues pointed out by the Block/District/State Level Vigilance Committees.

CHAPTER – 2

INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO STATE/UT GOVERNMENTS FOR STRENGTHENING TPDS AND TO CURB LEAKAGES/DIVERSIONS:

1. States/UT Governments should undertake a continuous campaign for review of BPL/AAY lists, to eliminate ghost ration cards.
2. Strict action should be taken against guilty persons to ensure leakage-free distribution of foodgrains. In this respect information under clause 9 of PDS (Control) Order, 2001 must be regularly submitted to Central Government by the State Governments.
3. For transparency in the functioning of TPDS, involvement of elected members of PRI/local municipal bodies in identification of AAY families and vigilance committees be ensured. As far as possible, FPS licenses be given to SHGs, cooperatives, etc.
4. BPL/AAY and APL lists should be displayed on all FPSs.
5. District-wise and FPS-wise allocation of foodgrains should be put up on websites and other prominent places, for public scrutiny.
6. Whenever possible, doorstep delivery of foodgrains to FPSs should be ensured, by States, instead of letting private transporters/wholesalers to transport the ration commodities.
7. Timely availability of foodgrains every month at FPS and their distribution to ration card holders must be ensured.
8. Training of members of FPS level Vigilance Committee should be ensured.
9. Computerization of TPDS operations should be undertaken.
10. Electronic transfer of funds to FCI be introduced.
11. Banners/boards on the windshield as well as rear end of the trucks/vehicles carrying PDS articles should indicate names of the State Government, destination, commodity and agent's name in addition to "TPDS".
12. Arrangements should be put in place to track movement of foodgrains from FCI godowns upto the Fair Price Shops.

CHAPTER - 3

RTI Act and TPDS

Action to be taken at various levels for facilitating effective use of RTI Act, 2005 with respect to TPDS operations will be as follows:

STATE LEVEL

- Norms for giving fresh licenses and eligibility criteria for getting a license for FPS shall be published. A list of FPS shopkeepers along with the period for which the licenses are valid shall be published on the District level web site.
- Methodology for identification of AAY beneficiaries and issuance of ration cards to them shall be notified on the web site.
- Criteria for preparing lists of the BPL families and identification of AAY families as well as their entitlements must be prominently displayed on notice boards of all District, Sub-Division, Block and Village level offices of Food and Civil Supplies Department. The information should be available in the official language of the State and made available to citizens for inspection on demand with fees as prescribed under the RTI Act.
- State Governments shall provide information to local Headmen/municipal Board/corporations on availability, movement and quality of foodgrains etc under TPDS.
- The District/Sub-Divisional Civil Supplies Officer shall endorse copies of orders allocating foodgrains to all rural and urban local bodies at District/City/Town/Block and Village level. Members of Village level Vigilance Committees shall be informed of it by the concerned Rural/Urban FPS.
- Detailed information about the Vigilance Committees such as their constitution, functions and powers may be displayed on the net.

AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL:

The intermediate levels include State level or regional level godowns, through which foodgrains pass after they leave FCI godowns on their way to FPS :-

- A ration card holder has the right to scrutinize the records and the physical stocks available at various storage godowns on an appointed day and time. This information must be displayed at the SWC/FCI depots.
- The frequency of issue of foodgrains to the FPS from the FCI/SWC depots should be mentioned on the notice board of the District/Sub-Divisional Civil Supplies Office.
- This Citizens' Charter should be displayed at all offices where ration card related work is done at the District/Sub-Division in the entire State.
- Citizens' Charter should include names and contact details of designated authorities to register complaints in cases where a violation of the charter/PDS Control Order, 2001 is noticed.
- Any citizen can apply for inspection of files relating to public distribution from the civil supplies department offices. Access must be allowed to citizens without asking for reasons for locus standi if exemptions are not applicable.
- Any citizen can apply under the RTI Act seeking samples of the grains stocked in the FCI/SWC storage depots and intermediate godowns or storage facilities. The same procedure prescribed in the Citizens' Charter for collection and sealing of samples may be followed in this case with the addition that the requestor may be present on site during collection of samples if he/she so desires. The cost of the samples should be paid for by the applicant.

AT FPS LEVEL:

- Each FPS shall display all relevant information such as each beneficiary's entitlement of various essential commodities, issue prices, name of Fair Price Shopkeeper, timings of opening and closing of FPS and weekly closing days, stock position, timing for inspection by citizens etc., at a conspicuous place.

- The FPS shall also display procedure for lodging complaints with reference to quality and quantity of ration commodities and other problems being faced by TPDS beneficiaries during the course of getting their ration.
 - Any consumer or local resident attached to the FPS is entitled to inspect the stock register, ration card register, other records and stocks available at the FPS at the appointed date/time.
 - FPS should display detailed lists of BPL & AAY households under its jurisdiction. Copies of these lists should also be displayed on notice boards of the Headmen's office/Community halls of the village/Municipal Board Office.
 - Complaint book with numbered pages should be maintained at each FPS and availability of the complaint book should be indicated for convenience of customers and general public.
 - FPS should not keep any ration card with them. During inspection if the FPS owner is found to keep with him ration cards of consumers, it should lead to penal action.
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List of abbreviations used:

AAY	-	Antyodaya Anna Yojna
APL	-	Above Poverty Line
BPL	-	Below Poverty Line
FCI	-	Food Corporation of India
SWC	-	State Warehousing Corporation
FPS	-	Fair Price Shop(s)
PRI	-	Panchayati Raj Institutions