

Chapter 5 Ration Cards

Ration Cards, termed as Family Identity Cards (FIC) in Assam, are authorized documents issued by the Government authority for obtaining benefits under PDS. There are three types of ration cards with separate colours meant for APL, BPL and AAY beneficiaries under PDS.

5.1 Households and Ration Cards

Scrutiny of the records revealed the following position of households and ration cards in use during 2005-10:

Table - 1
Position of households and ration cards in use

Year	Total no. of households	Total APL cards	Total BPL cards	Total AAY cards	(In lakh)	
					Total cards	Shortfall
2005-06	58.71	34.65	14.76	4.17	53.58	5.13
2006-07	60.21	35.01	13.45	5.58	54.04	6.17
2007-08	61.00	37.91	11.98	7.04	56.93	4.07
2008-09	62.00	38.41	12.02	7.04	57.47	4.53
2009-10	63.00	38.58	12.02	7.04	57.64	5.36

Source: Records of the Director, FCS&CA, Assam.

From the table above it would be seen that there was huge shortfall in issuing ration cards to the beneficiaries and the entire shortfall was in respect of APL families only. The printing of APL cards was also not done as per requirement while all the beneficiaries under BPL and AAY were provided with ration cards. Comments in this regard have been made separately in Paragraph 5.5.

5.2 Beneficiaries without Ration Cards

According to information furnished by the Director, APL households (beneficiaries) receiving PDS commodities without having any Family Identity Cards (FIC) ranged between 4.07 lakh to 6.17 lakh during 2005-10 (table above). In the absence of FICs of the APL households mentioned above it cannot be stated with certainty that the actual beneficiaries received the PDS commodities. Thus, possibility of leaving a section of beneficiaries outside the purview of PDS cannot be ruled out.

Actual test-check of the sub-divisions/GPSSs/FPSs disclosed that even the GPSS unauthorisedly issued FICs to beneficiaries and there were also instances of issuing ration without FICs as brought out in succeeding paragraphs.

5.3 Issue of ration cards to APL beneficiaries

Audit scrutiny of 31 GPSSs/WSCCSs selected for test-check revealed that in six GPSSs, 29,392 APL ration cards were issued unauthorisedly by the GPSSs against total 41,830 APL cards in operation. This constituted 70.27 per cent of APL cards for

which monthly allocations were made by the sub-divisional authority. The details of cards issued by GPSSs are given in the table below:

Table - 2
Issue of APL Ration Card by the six GPSSs/WCCSs

Sl.No.	Name of GPSSs/WCCSs	No. of APL beneficiaries tagged and getting ration	No. of APL Ration cards issued by the GPSS
1	Bongaigaon GPSS, Bongaigaon	7,109	998
2	Jogighopa GPSS, N. Salmara, Bongaigaon	11,315	11,315
3	Deohati Kakajana GPSS, N. Salmara, Bongaigaon	6,707	6,707
4	Sakti Ashram GPSS, Kokrajhar	4,335	4,335
5	Mahamaya GPSS, Parbatjhora, Kokrajhar	7,927	1,600
6	Parbatjowar GPSS, Parbatjhora, Kokrajhar	4,437	4,437
Total		41,830	29,392

Source: GPSS/WCCSS level formats.

The Department was aware of the issue of cards by GPSSs/WCCSs and stated (October 2010) that steps would be taken to replace these cards. Until such time, ration would continue to be issued on these unauthorized cards.

5.4 Distribution without Ration Cards

Test-check of the records of 31 selected GPSSs, revealed that all the 41,389 APL beneficiaries covered by six¹ (other than the six mentioned in the table -2 above) GPSSs had been receiving foodgrain under PDS, including the period under review, without having any ration cards. These beneficiaries were issued food commodities on the basis of lists of beneficiaries prepared by concerned GPSSs without any basis viz., survey etc., and maintained by the FPS owners thereby raising doubts over the authenticity of the existence of these beneficiaries. The sub-divisional FCS&CA authorities, however, failed to put forward any comments on the matter of distribution of foodgrain to these beneficiaries without any ration cards.

- Audit scrutiny of the records further revealed that as many as 44 FPSs (37 per cent) out of 120 test-checked had been distributing PDS Commodities to APL beneficiaries without any FIC but on the basis of list of beneficiaries approved by the sub-divisional authorities.

¹ (1) Chandrapur – 4,542; (2) Joypur – 4,658; (3) Meharpur Krishnapur – 7,871; (4) Mancotta – 10,294; (5) Gohpur – 9,995; (6) Kalabari – 4,029 = 41,389.

- In respect of four FPSs selected under 'Sepon GPSS' of Dibrugarh district/civil sub-division², audit scrutiny revealed that all the PDS commodities had been issued to 327 APL (three FPSs), 174 BPL (four FPSs) and 100 AAY (four FPSs) beneficiaries without having any ration cards whereas the PDS (Control) Order, 2001 envisaged that the PDS commodities are to be issued to ration card holders only through the identified fair price shops. Thus, the primary requirement of PDS for distribution of commodities to the ration card holders only through FPSs was not fulfilled in respect of the said FPSs.

5.5 Maintenance of Stock registers of Ration Cards (APL, BPL and AAY)

Audit scrutiny of stock registers of FIC/Ration Cards revealed that 24,25,000 cards for APL; 18,86,000 cards for BPL and 7,27,800 cards for AAY were recorded as received for distribution in various districts/sub-divisions. Out of total available FICs, 22,66,951 for APL; 18,86,000 for BPL and 6,56,902 for AAY cards were issued to various districts/sub-divisions. The statement showing the position of receipts and issue of APL, BPL and AAY cards are shown in the *Appendices - I and II*.

Audit scrutiny further revealed that the date-wise/district-wise or sub-division wise issue and resultant balance of cards were not maintained properly. Moreover, in case of BPL families shifted to AAY scheme, the old cards with BPL families were neither taken back and cancelled nor any accounts in this regard were maintained.

Thus, due to improper maintenance of stock registers of FICs, the actual position of receipts, distribution and balances of cards, could not be ascertained in audit. Possibility of getting benefits under both the schemes of BPL and AAY as well as leaving out a section of targeted population from the ambit of TPDS for want of FICs could not be ruled out. On this being pointed out in audit, Director (FCS&CA) stated (July 2010) that the stock registers of APL, BPL and AAY ration cards were duly certified by the Joint Director. The reply was not tenable as it was silent about maintenance of date-wise/district-wise or sub-division wise data in respect of issue of ration cards and resultant balance thereof in the stock registers.

In essence, the allocation and lifting of PDS commodities were not done on the basis of actual position of authorized ration card holders.

Recommendation

State Government should review the position of ration cards in operation and replace unauthorized cards, including retrieving the BPL cards of families now under AAY category.

² Only one civil sub-division under the District.