No proposal for any amendment to the NFSA

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Raosaheb Patil Danve, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, said that the government has no proposal for any Amendment to the National Food Security Act (NFSA), which is already in force.

Replying to question in the lok sabha, the minister said, "The states/ union territories (UTs) are already required to comply with certain pre-requisites like completion of the ongoing scheme for computerization of Targeted Public Distribution System operations, which includes putting up digitized list of beneficiaries on transparency portal; putting in place grievance redressal mechanism, etc. as per requirement of NFSA, in order to start implementation of the Act."

He further said that after examining the recommendations of the High Level Expert Committee appointed by the Government for restructuring of Food Corporation of India (FCI) as regards NFSA, Direct transfer of cash subsidy is one of the options discussed in various fora for checking diversion of foodgrains. Its implementation, however, depends upon readiness of States/ UTs in terms of digitization and de-duplication of beneficiary data-base seeds with bank account numbers and it can be taken up on specific requests from States/ UTs.

The committee came up with following recommendations –

i) to defer implementation of NFSA in States that have not done end to end computerization; have not put the list of beneficiaries online for anyone to verify, and have not set up vigilance committees to check pilferage form Public Distribution System (PDS).

ii) to reduce coverage from 67% of population to 40 % ; raise allocation to priority households form 5 kg to 7 kg per person per month.

iii) to gradually introduce cash transfers in Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), starting with large cities with more than 1 million population; extending it to grain surplus States, and then giving option to deficit States to opt for cash or

physical grain distribution.