

DR. N. C. SAXENA
COMMISSIONER OF THE SUPREME COURT

IN THE CASE: PUCL Vs UOI & ORS. WRIT PETITION (Civil) NO. 196 of 2001

3.02.05
Irreg-MDM-PDS/274/guj

To

Shri. P.K. Laheri
Chief Secretary
Government of Gujarat, Block no.1,
3rd Floor, New Sachivalaya,
Gandhinagar, 382010

Sub: Irregularities in TPDS and MDMS in Dahaod District

Dear Shri. Laheri

I would like to bring to your kind notice a media report on irregularities in PDS and MDMS in Dahod District, which surfaced at a public hearing organized by an NGO and attended by district collector of Dahod.

It was reported that there were irregularities in distribution and pricing of food grains and kerosene at fair-price shops. The instances of wrong entries in cards, shops being closed for several days at a stretch and stock signs not being displayed at shops also emerged during the public hearing. As these would account to violations of Supreme Court orders as well as the state government directions, I would request you to kindly take measures to address the problem surfaced during the public hearing.

I am also concerned about responses from the District Supply Officer that the confusion in identification of BPL families arose because the task of preparing the cards was entrusted to a private company. I request you to kindly send me the details of how the identification of BPL households was carried out and which agencies were involved in the process. Did the state government actually entrust this task to a private agency. I request you to also send me the all relevant Government Orders and letters from the Central Government and State government in this regard.

The media report also cited the response of the District Collector of Dahob that the MDMS was not functional as the suppliers stopped supply, citing as an excuse that the State government had not made payments for food items in the last six months. I request you to look into this issue and immediately renew the supply of essentials to operationlise MDMS in the district.

With Regards,

Dr. N. C. Saxena

Enclosures: Media Report

CC: Shri. P D Vaghela, Nodal officer to Commissioner, Shri. Ashok Chawla, Assistant to Commissioners.

Annexure

NGO survey gives plenty of food for thought

Express News Service

Vadodara, December 9: A survey conducted by NGOs on food security in the Panchmahals and Dahod districts has revealed that more than 80 per cent of people in the two districts remain “food insecure” for over six months in a year.

“The food availability graph starts declining after summer, all through the monsoon months and then picks up before winter. So throughout summer and monsoon, food availability remained a major issue for the 1,435 families we surveyed,” said Sejal A Dand, one of the co-authors of the survey report.

The report, along with specific cases pertaining to irregular distribution and pricing of foodgrains and kerosene at fair-price shops, was presented at a public hearing where district officials and NGO representatives were present. About 1,500 people from Dahod, the Panchmahals, Bharuch and Anand districts attended the meeting organised by Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI) in Devgadhi Baria.

The NGOs had conducted a survey and collected case histories from the Panchmahals and Dahod. Issues like malpractices in releasing less foodgrains and kerosene to BPL card-holders, wrong entries in cards of illiterate card-holders, shops not opening for several days at a stretch, not putting up of stock signs at shops were discussed.

When the participants said that there were no guidelines set to distinguish an above poverty line (APL) family from a below poverty line (BPL) one in public distribution system (PDS) as introduced during the Narasimha Rao government, District Supply Officer (Panchmahals) Prashant Joshi had his point to offer. “The department lacks manpower so the task of preparing the cards was entrusted to a private company. That led to the current confusions,” he said.

Anganwadi workers and teachers complained about irregular supply of food items meant for the mid-day meal scheme. Dahod District Collector R R Solanki who sympathised with them said: “Suppliers stopped supply citing that the State government had not made payments for food items in the last six months.”

When they said that officials at the collectorate were not listening to their problems, Solanki however said that he would personally look into the matter.

Jahnvi Andharia of ANANDI said: “The hearing was organised to take up issues like prevailing corruption and malpractices at PDS shops, a flawed system for distribution of APL and BPL ration cards, and several pro-poor government schemes being launched without proper provisions, etc.”

Source: <http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=109748>