

## **PRESS NOTE**

### **Eligible poor left out in identification of 'Poor Left Out' benefits under PDS**

Following the order of Supreme Court of India,<sup>1</sup> to identify the poor families and allocation of adhoc /additional allocation under TPSD for poorest districts, Govt. of Odisha in 19 districts completed its selection of poor households and started distribution of rice during June 2012. In Ganjam govt. Odisha identified 50,700 left out poor beneficiaries and provisioned for distribution of rice of 35 kilograms per month for period of 9 months starting from November 2011 to July 2012. Beneficiaries will get their quota 150 Kg in June'12, 100Kg in July'12 and 65kg in August '12.

Berhampur Municipal Corporation has allotted 5,180 beneficiaries HHs (140 per ward for 37 wards) under this Poor Left out (PLO) Scheme. It has been found that many eligible beneficiaries are excluded under the PLO scheme and many ineligible beneficiaries are included. The selection of PLO which was conducted by BMC during October'11, creates a big question mark and indicates ineligible households with sound income and having property are included and favored by the local corporator.

The **eligibility criteria** which includes less than Rs. 5000 income per month, identified by the wards sabha, people with special cases like disabled, single women, homeless, destitute, elderly and deliberate illness, and who are most vulnerable. In most of the wards it has been found many persons and families qualifying above criteria are excluded. There are many cases we have indentified (cases attached).

The **exclusion criterion** which governs are owner of 2/3/4 wheeler, having KCC, government employee, income/professional tax payer, three or more rooms with pucca wall and pucca roof, 2.5 acres of land, owing AC, color TV, refrigerator, washing machine, DTH connection, landline phones and consuming 60 units of electricity per month. It has been complained in most of the wards that many families and people having these exclusion criteria are selected as a beneficiary under PLO and it has been also found many single households benefitting with multiple cards.

The **ward sabha** which ward level meeting will be convened for identification of beneficiaries and shall be attended by the local Corporator, concerned Revenue Inspector and the Commissioner and an officer nominated by the District Magistrate. In case of Berhampur there has been no physical evidence of conduct of such meeting by BMC even the households have no knowledge of such committee or any meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Supreme Court of India-Public Distribution System-W.P. (C) 196 of 2001\_PUCL\_Vrs Union of India and others, order dt.14.05.2011- distribution of food grains to 150 poorest districts

To make the identification of PLO process fair and transparent the authority (BMC) should make **wide publicity** among the ward households and families. It has been persistent objection from the poor slum dwellers in Berhampur that there is no publicity done to create awareness and ensure their participation in the identification of PLO thorough ward sabha.

Complete exclusion of **ineligible person** and bogus cards is another important order from the government of Odisha which was done in very a superficial manner that there are still many ineligible persons and households remains under BPL category and a significant amount of bogus cards held by the FPS shop owners.

This is a very serious issue where the actual eligible and left out poor/beneficiaries are still remain left out due the poor compliance to the guideline of identification process which is ordered in various times by the Food Supply and Consumer Welfare Department, Govt. of Odisha.

Hence we at Coalition Against Corruption demand a fair and transparent selection process of poor left out and give justice to the actual beneficiary. On the other hand to complete abolition of bogus cards held by the fair price shop owners and also to exclude all ineligible beneficiaries from the list of poor. We also demand that ward committees at different ward level should be formed and ensure participation of all households in the each ward in Berhampur Municipal Corporation.

*For more details contact*

**Coalition Against Corruption team**

Bibhu Prasad Sahu-99371 90060

Guru Charan Patro

Saroj Kumar Pattnaik

Surya Narayan Behera