Retail – Groceries

**OVERVIEW**

**What is retail grocery?**

The retail grocery sector in India exhibits a dual structure, with a predominantly unorganized market comprising local Kirana stores alongside a growing organized sector, notably seen in urban areas. Contributing significantly to the country's GDP, the retail market in India has been one of the fastest-growing globally. The food and grocery segment constitutes the largest share at 63 percent, reflecting its essential role in consumer spending. Major players like Reliance Retail and DMart have expanded their presence, offering a mix of traditional and modern shopping experiences. Government initiatives such as GST and efforts to encourage FDI have influenced the sector, while challenges like supply chain inefficiencies persist. Technology integration is evident with the rise of online grocery platforms, catering to changing consumer preferences. Overall, the Indian retail grocery sector faces a dynamic landscape with both traditional and modern retail formats coexisting and evolving to meet the demands of a diverse consumer base.

**What are the grounds for complaint?**

In the retail grocery sector of India, consumers may have various grounds for lodging complaints. These can include issues related to product quality, service, pricing, and overall customer experience. Here are some common grounds for complaint in the retail grocery sector:

* *Product Quality and Freshness:*
* Complaints about the quality of perishable goods, such as fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy products.
* Concerns about expired or nearly expired products on the shelves.
* Issues with the freshness and condition of packaged foods.
* *Pricing and Billing:*
* Discrepancies in pricing, including overcharging or undercharging.
* Complaints related to incorrect billing and discrepancies between the shelf price and the checkout price.
* *Customer Service:*
* Poor customer service, including rude or unhelpful staff.
* Delays and inefficiencies in addressing customer queries or concerns.
* Inadequate assistance during the shopping process.
* *Hygiene and Cleanliness:*
* Complaints about the cleanliness and hygiene of the store premises.
* Concerns about the maintenance of food storage and display areas.
* *Stock Availability:*
* Issues with out-of-stock items, leading to inconvenience for customers.
* Complaints about inaccuracies in inventory management.
* *Promotions and Discounts:*
* Problems related to the application of discounts or promotions.
* Misleading advertising or marketing campaigns.
* *Inadequate Facilities:*
* Complaints about the lack of proper facilities, such as clean restrooms, shopping carts, or baskets.
* Accessibility issues for differently-abled individuals.
* *Online Shopping Experience:*
* Complaints related to online grocery shopping, including late deliveries or damaged products during transit.
* Technical glitches or difficulties in using online platforms.
* *Environmental Concerns:*
* Complaints about excessive use of plastic packaging or lack of eco-friendly practices.
* Inadequate waste disposal mechanisms within the store.
* *Product Information:*
* Lack of clear and accurate information on product labels, including nutritional details and ingredients.
* Misrepresentation or false advertising of products.
* *Misleading Product Placement:*
* Complaints about strategically placing products to encourage impulse buying or misleading customers about discounts and offers.
* *Inadequate Labelling for Allergens:*
* Concerns about insufficient or unclear labelling of allergens in food products, posing a risk to customers with allergies.
* *Inadequate Expiry Date Visibility:*
* Concerns about expiry dates being unclear or difficult to read on product packaging, leading to potential oversights by consumers.

**When complaints would not be accepted?**

In the retail grocery sector of India, there are instances when complaints may not be readily accepted or addressed. Several factors contribute to this situation:

* *Expired Product Purchases:*

Complaints related to the purchase of expired or spoiled products may face resistance if customers fail to check the product's expiration date at the time of purchase. Retailers may be less inclined to accept complaints in such cases.

* *Inadequate Proof of Purchase:*

Retailers often require customers to provide valid proof of purchase, such as a receipt or invoice, to address complaints. Without proper documentation, it can be challenging for customers to have their concerns acknowledged.

* *Damage post-purchase:*

Complaints about product damage or deterioration that occur after the purchase, especially if the customer fails to report it promptly, might face challenges in being accepted. Retailers may assume the damage was not due to a manufacturing defect.

* *Non-Compliance with Return Policies:*

Failure to adhere to the retailer's return policies, such as attempting to return products beyond the stipulated time frame or not following the prescribed procedure, could lead to the rejection of complaints.

* *Customer Misuse or Mishandling:*

Complaints arising from customer misuse or mishandling of products may not be accepted, as retailers typically expect customers to follow recommended usage guidelines.

* *Perceived Customer Abuse of Return Policies:*

In cases where customers are perceived to exploit liberal return policies, retailers may become more stringent in accepting complaints, aiming to prevent misuse.

* *Inadequate Communication of Issues:*

If customers fail to communicate their concerns effectively or in a timely manner, retailers may find it challenging to address the issues appropriately, leading to potential non-acceptance of complaints.

* *Policy Variations Among Retailers:*

Different retailers may have varying policies regarding complaint resolution. Customers may encounter difficulties if they expect uniformity in policies across the industry.

* *Non-Compliance with Packaging Instructions:*

If a customer fails to follow the packaging and handling instructions provided on the product, and subsequently complains about issues arising from non-compliance, the retailer may be less inclined to accept the complaint.

* *Bulk or Wholesale Purchases:*

Complaints related to bulk or wholesale purchases may face resistance, as retailers often have different policies for such transactions. Customers may find that the terms for returns or replacements differ when products are bought in large quantities.

* *Discounted or Clearance Items:*

Retailers may be less willing to address complaints related to discounted or clearance items, as these products are often sold "as is," and customers may be aware of potential imperfections at the time of purchase.

* *Failure to Report Issues Promptly:*

Timely reporting of product issues is crucial. If customers delay in notifying the retailer about problems or defects, the legitimacy of their complaints may be questioned, leading to potential non-acceptance.

* *Consumable Products:*

Complaints about consumable products, such as perishable goods or items with a short shelf life, may face resistance if customers do not raise concerns promptly or provide evidence of spoilage within the recommended timeframe.

**What is the complaint redressal system?**

* *Retailer's Customer Service Departments:*

Consumers are encouraged to initially engage with the retailer's customer service departments to resolve grievances directly. These departments often handle complaints related to product quality, pricing, or service-related issues. Consumers should provide all relevant information about the purchase to expedite the resolution process.

* *Consumer Protection Agencies:*

If the issue persists after engaging with the retailer, consumers can file a complaint with local consumer protection agencies or consumer affairs departments. These agencies typically have specific procedures for filing complaints and can offer guidance on consumer rights. They act as intermediaries to address disputes between consumers and retailers.

* *Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (CDRC):*

Established under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986, the CDRC operates at the District, State, and National levels. Consumers can file complaints related to unfair trade practices, defective goods or services, overcharging, hazardous products, and misleading advertising. The CDRC serves as a quasi-judicial body, allowing consumers to seek redressal for their grievances without the complexities of traditional legal procedures. The complainant has the option to take the service provider to a court or another suitable venue based on jurisdiction.

commissions are as follows-

a) *District Commission:* The aggrieved consumer can reach out to the District Commission under section 34 of the CPA, 2019, which provides that the district commission shall entertain matters where the value of the goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed more than one crore rupees.

<https://ncdrc.nic.in/districtlist.html>

b) *State Commission:* In cases where the value of the goods or services paid as consideration is more than one crore, but less than 10 crores, the consumer can approach the State Commission. Moreover, in cases of unfair contracts, the State Commission has original jurisdiction and the consumer can be directly approached. An appeal against the order of the District Commission can also be made under section 47 of the CPA, 2019.

<https://ncdrc.nic.in/statelist.html>

c) *National Commission:* The National Commission can entertain matters where the value of goods or services paid as consideration exceeds 10 crores. Section 58 also provides that complaints against unfair contracts can be entertained by NCDRC when the amount of value paid exceeds 10 crores. The NCDRC also has appellate jurisdiction against the orders of any State Commission and Central Authority.

<https://ncdrc.nic.in/>

* *Online Consumer Complaint Platforms:*

Several online platforms facilitate the filing of consumer complaints against retailers. These platforms act as intermediaries and can guide consumers on the appropriate course of action. They often collaborate with consumer protection agencies to ensure the swift resolution of complaints.

<https://consumerhelpline.gov.in/>

* *Ombudsman Services:*

Some regions have ombudsman services that specialize in resolving disputes between consumers and businesses. These independent bodies provide an alternative dispute resolution mechanism, aiming to settle complaints efficiently and fairly.

* *Consumer Education Programs:*

Initiatives aimed at educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities can empower them to make informed decisions. Awareness programs conducted by consumer protection organizations and NGOs play a vital role in enhancing consumer knowledge about filing complaints and seeking redressal.

* *Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Services:*

ADR mechanisms, such as mediation and arbitration, provide an alternative to traditional legal avenues. Consumers and retailers can voluntarily engage in ADR processes to resolve disputes with the assistance of neutral third parties.

* *Quality Assurance and Certification Bodies:*

Consumers can approach quality assurance and certification bodies related to the grocery sector. These organizations play a role in ensuring that products meet specified standards, and they may intervene in cases where non-compliance or quality issues arise.

* *Central Consumer Protection Authority:*

If the commission finds violations of rights of consumers or in notice of trade practices which is unfair it can inquire or cause an inquiry, either on receipt of complaint or Suo moto or as directed by Central Government. If the commission finds, after preliminary inquiry, of an existence of a prima facie case of consumer rights violation or it is in notice of any unfair trade practice or any wrong or inaccurate advertisement which is prejudicial to public interest or to the interests of the consumers, it can order an investigation by the District Collector or by Director General. The consumer can complain to the District Collector of the respective district for investigation and subsequent proceedings by the CCPA. He/she/they can also submit a complaint via email, at [com-ccpa@nic.in.](about:blank)

**What are the regulatory bodies?**

In the retail grocery sector of India, several regulatory bodies oversee and regulate various aspects of the industry to ensure fair practices, consumer protection, and overall market stability. Some of the key regulatory bodies include:

* *Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI):*

FSSAI is the primary regulatory body responsible for ensuring the safety and quality of food products in India. It sets standards for food products and regulates their manufacturing, storage, distribution, sale, and import to ensure consumer safety.

<https://www.fssai.gov.in/>

* *Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution:*

This ministry oversees consumer-related issues, including those related to the retail grocery sector. It formulates policies and regulations to protect consumers' interests and ensure fair trade practices.

<https://consumeraffairs.nic.in/>

* *Competition Commission of India (CCI):*

CCI is responsible for promoting fair competition in the market. It investigates anti-competitive practices and takes measures to ensure a level playing field for businesses, including those in the retail grocery sector.

<https://www.cci.gov.in/>

* *Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP):*

DIPP, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, formulates and implements policies related to industrial development and foreign direct investment (FDI).

Policies related to FDI in retail are crucial for shaping the landscape of the organized retail sector.

<https://dpiit.gov.in/>

* *State Agricultural Marketing Boards:*

Each state in India has its own Agricultural Marketing Board or APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee), which regulates the buying and selling of agricultural produce. These boards play a role in the procurement and distribution of agricultural products, impacting the retail grocery sector.

<https://agmarknet.gov.in/MarketingBoards/>

* *State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions:*

At the state level, Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions handle consumer complaints and disputes. Consumers can approach these commissions if they face issues related to the quality of grocery products or unfair trade practices.

<https://ncdrc.nic.in/>

[https://ncdrc.nic.in/statelist.html](about:blank)

* *Ministry of Food Processing Industries:*

This ministry focuses on policies related to the processing and packaging of food products. It plays a role in shaping regulations that impact the food industry, including the retail grocery sector.

<https://www.mofpi.gov.in/>

* *State Health Departments:*

State health departments are involved in enforcing health and hygiene standards in food retail establishments. They may conduct inspections and take regulatory actions to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations.

<https://main.mohfw.gov.in/?q=Organisation/state-health-departments-0>

* *Legal Metrology Department:*

This department, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, ensures compliance with legal metrology laws, including standards of weights and measures. It plays a role in regulating packaging and labeling in the retail grocery sector.

<https://www.emapan.karnataka.gov.in/>

* *National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA):*

NAA ensures that businesses pass on the benefits of reduced taxes under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to consumers. This authority can impact pricing and fairness in the retail grocery sector.

<https://www.naa.gov.in/index.php>

**What are the landmark judgments in retail grocery?**

**What are the Acts and Guidelines that govern retail grocery?**

* Consumer Protection Act, 2019
* Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act, 2016
* Legal Metrology Act, 2009
* Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act
* Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)
* Competition Act, 2002
* Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006
* E-Commerce Guidelines
* Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (1954)
* Packaged Commodities Rules.
* The Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
* Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supply of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.
* Customs Act, 1962.
* Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020.
* Model Shops and Establishments (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 2016.

**What are the international conventions that govern retail grocery?**

* *World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements:*

India is a member of the WTO, and agreements related to trade, subsidies, and technical barriers to trade may have implications for the retail grocery sector.

* *International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Standards:* Adherence to ISO standards, especially in product quality, safety, and labelling, can be crucial for the retail grocery sector to meet international benchmarks.
* *Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI):*

GFSI is a collaboration between international food safety experts. It sets benchmarks for food safety management systems, and adherence to GFSI standards is recognized globally, affecting the retail grocery sector's supply chain and product safety practices.

* *International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions:*

Certain ILO conventions, such as those related to labour standards, may impact working conditions within the retail grocery industry, ensuring fair treatment of workers.

* *World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC):*

If the retail grocery sector sells tobacco products, adherence to the FCTC can influence regulations related to the sale and promotion of tobacco items.

*Consumer Durables FAQs*

**1. How are Consumer products classified into categories?**

Consumer Durable can be broadly classified into three categories depending upon their price and usage. These are: White Goods, Brown Goods, Shiny goods and Fast Moving Consumer Goods.

**2. What are the Home Appliances in Consumer Durable?**

Home appliances are electrical/mechanical machines which accomplish some household functions, such as cooking or cleaning. Home appliances can be classified into: o Major appliances, or White goods o Small appliances, or Brown goods o Consumer electronics, or Shiny goods.

**3. What are White goods?**

White goods are major household appliances and may include air conditioner, dishwasher, clothes dryer, drying cabinet, freezer, refrigerator, kitchen stove, water heater, washing machine, , microwave ovens and induction cookers.

**4. What are Brown Goods?**

Brown goods/small appliances are typically small household electrical entertainment appliances such as: TV sets, CD and DVD players, camcorders, still cameras, clocks, alarm clocks, video game consoles, HiFi and home cinema, telephones and answering machines.

**5. What is Consumer Electronics?**

Consumer electronics are electronic equipment intended for everyday use, most often in entertainment, communications and office productivity. Products include personal computers, telephones, MP3 players, audio equipment, calculators, GPS automotive electronics, digital cameras and players and recorders using video media such as DVDs, VCRs or camcorders etc.

**6. What type of goods are categorized as FMCGs?**

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) or consumer-packaged goods (CPG) are products that are sold quickly and at relatively low cost. Examples include non-durable goods such as soft drinks, toiletries, over-the-counter drugs, toys, processed foods and many other consumables.

**7. What is limitation while purchasing Electronics products?**

Shopping products generally involve more time, cost and efforts from the consumers part as they are considered as a higher risk proposition by the consumer. Before buying any product, a prospective customer will have a look at all different brands, products and product features. Once the customer knows what kind of features he is looking for, he would compare the costing of each brand. Finally after he has been convinced of one particular product and its value for money, he will go ahead with the purchase.

**8. What are the Quality standards associated with special electronic products?**

As per the Bureau of Indian Standards, ISI and BEE standards are associated with electronic products.

**9. What precautions must be taken while purchasing electronic products?**

It is advisable to take the following precautions : o Please verify the suitability for your application by your quality testing, evaluation, etc. o Delivery specifications mutually agreed for the product that you have decided to use o The agreements defined in the delivery specifications are assigned higher priority o Please note that images shown may somewhat differ from the actual product o Please note that specifications and external design are subject to change for product improvement without notice ? For details on products in the website, please contact a the company or its distributor

**10. What is difference between warranty and guarantee for electronic products ?**

A warranty is usually a written guarantee for a product and declares the maker's responsibility to repair or replace a defective product or its parts. A guarantee is an agreement assuming responsibility to perform, execute, or complete something and offering security for that agreement. However, companies generally offer only warranty for their products.

**11. What is After Sales Service ?**

After sales service refers to various processes that make sure customers are satisfied with the products and services of the organization.

**12. Why is important to have a good after Sales Service?**

After sales service plays an important role in customer satisfaction and customer retention. It generates loyal customers. Customers start believing in the brand and get associated with the organization for a longer duration. They speak about the organization and its products. A satisfied and happy customer brings more individuals and eventually more revenue for the organization. A good post sale service plays a pivotal role in strengthening the bond between the organization and customers.

**13. What are good After Sales Service Techniques that you must look out for?**

Sales Professionals provides the necessary support, helping in installing, maintain or operate a particular product. Sales professionals selling laptops ensure windows are configured in the system and customers are able to use net without any difficulty. Similarly organizations selling mobile sim cards ensure the number is activated immediately once the customer submits the necessary documents. ? Generally, stays in touch with the customers even after the deal. ? Any product found broken or in a damaged condition is exchanged immediately. The customer is not harassed. Customer grievances are heard and made to feel comfortable. ? The organization?s website contains a section for customers to register their complaints. Every organization should have a toll free number for customers to call and discuss their queries. The customer service officers take prompt action on the customer?s queries. ? Take feedback of the products and services from customers at predefined intervals. Feedback helps the organization to know the customers and the perceived value of their products or services ? Ask customers to sign Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) with the organization. AMC is an agreement signed between the organization and the customer where the organization promises to provide after sales services to the second party for certain duration at nominal costs. ? The exchange policies must be transparent.

**14. What are the types of after sales Support?**

The various kinds of after-sales support may consist of the following: Onsite warranty means "Service at the door Step?. The respective company will send its technician to your house or designated place to repair the product. If it is not repairable then he takes the product to the service center or lab for repairing. (for example washing machine, refrigerator, TV). The laptop may have either onsite or offsite warranty. Offsite warranty means if there is a problem in the product, then, the consumer is expected to take the product to the site where manufacturer is located and get it serviced /repaired. (For example, mobile handset and mixers). Extended Warranty means an extension of the coverage period on a standard warranty. With an extended warranty, the consumer is able to extend the time that the producer is liable for issues. Consumers are often given the option to include the additional coverage either at the time of purchase or when the standard warranty is going to expire.

**15. What are the types of service centers?**

There are three types of service centers: a. Company owned and managed Service centre which are exclusive and usually available in major cities. Company owned centre and franchisees are liable to the company and in case of any issue with the service centre, complaint can be made to the company. These centers have common application to enter the complaint and issue the work order which is accessible to the respective company, can check the status of the complaint b. Company authorized franchisees / Service centre, which are third party administrator and associated with the company. In case of any issue with the local service centre, the complaint cannot be taken up to the company and the same has to be dealt with the service centre only. c. Local Service centre who don?t belong to company and can offer services for more than one company.

**16. What are Consumer Durables?**

Consumer durables, is a category of consumer goods that do not wear out quickly and therefore do not have to be purchased frequently. They are known as "durable goods" items. eg A home appliance, domestic appliance or household appliance, is a device which assists in household functions such as cooking, cleaning and food preservation. Durable or hard goods are goods that can stand up to time. The Consumer Durables industry consists of durable goods and appliances for domestic use such as televisions, refrigerators, air conditioners and washing machines. Instruments such as mobile phones and kitchen appliances like microwave ovens etc.

**17. If consumer purchased goods for his commercial purpose, can consumer file case in consumer commission against company?**

Commercial services are not cover under Consumer Protection Act.

**18. What should consumer do if he has received a faulty product purchased from the Company/ official website?**

If consumer received faulty product from company, he must raise a grievance with the company.

**19. What is a return/Replacement policy?**

Product return/Replacement policy depend on the company terms and conditions.

**20. What is Product warranty period?**

A warranty period is the period of time that warrant free repair and adjustment services in case of a malfunction occurred under normal use that has followed instruction manuals. The period varies according to manufacturers, retailers, and products.

**21. What is Product extended warranty?**

An extended warranty, sometimes called a service agreement, a service contract, or a maintenance agreement, is a prolonged warranty offered to consumers in addition to the standard warranty on new items. Extended warranties cost extra and for a percentage of the item's retail price.

**22. Is it mandatory to take product extended warranty?**

No, it is not mandatory - It depends on the consumer. Extended warranties protect the consumer from high expense in case an expensive part needs to be replaced. Consumer must go through the terms and conditions of extended warranties for the benefits.

**23. If the company does not provide services or the consumer is not satisfied with the company resolution?**

If a product is under warranty, the company has to honour it as per the terms of the warranty. If consumer is not satisfied with the services provided, he can file a complaint in the consumer commission.

*Public Distribution System FAQs*

**1. What is Public Distribution System?**

Public distribution system is a government-sponsored chain of shops entrusted with the work of distributing basic food and non-food commodities to the needy sections of the society at very cheap prices. Wheat, rice, kerosene, sugar, etc. are a few major commodities distributed by the public distribution system.

**2. How one can get a Ration Card?**

Any person permanently residing or intending so to do in a particular location and who desires to have a Household Consumer Card (HCC), commonly referred to as Permanent Ration Card (PRC), can be issued one if he, or some other person on his behalf, is not already in possession of such a card, or if name of any member of his family is not included in another HCC.

**3. Can a consumer card be issued to my servant who is residing with us?**

You may apply for inclusion of your servant's name in your consumer card, preferably after getting his police verification.

**4. I am a new resident in jhuggi cluster. Can I be issued a household consumer card ?**

Yes

**5. Do I have to make different household consumer cards for different commodities?**

For all specified articles sold through public distribution system (PDS), only one consumer card is required.

**6. What can I do if my landlord is not giving me any rent receipt or NOC indicating my residence?**

Witness of two neighbors or any other proof of continuous residence may be submitted.

**7. What can I do in case I do not have any evidence of surrender of my previous consumer card?**

In such cases, an affidavit attested by the area SDM/Oath Commissioner/Notary Public may be submitted.

**8. How does one locate the FPS/Kerosene Oil Depot at which my consumer card has to be registered?**

The number of FPS/KOD is mentioned on your household consumer card. While obtaining your consumer card, you should ask for address of the FPS where your card is linked from the Circle Office.

**9. What should I do if I want to draw my supplies from a FPS/KOD located nearer to my dwelling unit?**

You may apply to Circle Office on a specified form to get your card registered with the nearer FPS/KOD.

**10. Can I draw specified articles from the FPS in respect of a member of family included in the household consumer card who has been away for some time?**

Household consumer card is available for lawful use for the persons included therein who are actually residing at the given address at the time of drawing supplies. In case of absence from the household for a period exceeding one month of any person included in the household consumer card, the holder of the HCC shall give prompt intimation to the FSO of the Circle in which he is residing and shall present his household consumer card for deletion of name of such person in case he is likely to be away for quite some time.

**11. How much quantity of Wheat and Rice are admissible for a BPL/AAY Cardholder and at what price?**

Allocation of food grains (rice and wheat) is made by Central Government under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) @ 35 kg. per family per month for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families including Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families in the country. Allocations of food grains for Above Poverty Line (APL) families are made depending upon availability of food grain stocks in the Central Pool and past offtake by the State/UT. The allocations for APL families in States/UTs range between 15 to 35 kg per family per month.

**12. Am I entitled to get sugar in case some of the co-resident included in my household consumer card are filing returns and are assessed to income tax, though, none is paying income tax ?**

Sugar is issued on household consumer card where none of the persons included in the household consumer card is an income tax assessed

**13. How do I know the rates fixed by the government for different articles being sold at the FPS/KOD?**

Prices of all articles sold through FPS as fixed by the government are displayed at the notice board of the shop.

**14. Can I draw supplies to which I am entitled but which have not been drawn during the relevant period, in a sub sequent period?**

No.

**15. What is Antyodaya Anna Yojana?**

Antyodaya Anna Yojana has been launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on the 25th December,2000. This scheme reflects the commitment of the Government of India to ensure food security for all create a hunger free India in the next five years and to reform and improve the Public Distribution System so as to serve the poorest of the poor in rural and urban areas. It is for the poorest of poor that the Antyodya Anna Yojana has been conserved. It is estimated that 5% of population are unable to get two square meals a day on a sub stained basis throughout the year. Their purchasing power is so low that they are not in a position to buy food grains round the year even at BPL rates. It is this 5% of out population (5 crores of people or 1 crore families) which constitutes the target group of Antyodaya Anna Yojana.

**16. Are the ration cards different for AAY target group?**

After the identification of Antyodaya families, distinctive ration cards to be known a "Antyodaya Ration Card" should be issued to the Antyodaya families by the designated authority. The ration card should have the necessary details about the Antyodaya family, scale of ration etc.

**17. Where and how to apply for AAY?**

As this scheme is for poorest of the poor families, the person has to contact 1. For Rural Area: The person living in rural area has to apply on a plan paper with details of his family member?s income etc. to the Panchayat Pradhan of his area for this scheme. Gram Sabha will decide whether the family is eligible to be taken under the Scheme or not. After the selection of families the list will be further approved by the Department of Rural Development, Himachal Pradesh and the Ration Card will be issued by the Pradhan /DFSC or after the approval of the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department. 2.For Urban Area: The person living in the urban area will have to apply on plan paper to Notified Area Committee. After the selection of the families the list will be further approved by the Urban Development Department and Card will be issued by Concerned DFSC/ Authorized Inspector of that area.

**18. What is the grievance redressal mechanism available for the beneficiaries of TPDS?**

The operational responsibility for allocation and distribution of food grains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision over and monitoring of functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) rests with the concerned State/UT Government. Therefore, as and when complaints are received in the Department from individuals and organizations as well as through press reports, they are sent to State/UT Governments concerned for inquiry and appropriate action. In case of any grievance relating to the above- referred aspects, the Food & Civil Supplies authorities of the State/UT concerned may be approached. Further, some States/UTs have established toll free Helpline numbers for redressal and registration of grievances under TPDS. A list of the toll free and other Helpline numbers reported to be established in the States/UTs is enclosed as per Annexure. NFSA, 2013 also provides for a two tier grievance redressal mechanism comprising of District Grievance Redressal Officer (DGRO) at the District level and State Food Commission (SFC) at the State level. For Toll free Helplines of PDS state wise see www http://dfpd.nic.in/faq.htm