

Govt urges state food commissions to give special attention to vulnerable section

By TIOL News Service

NEW DELHI, DEC 05, 2020: The

Centre on Friday held a review meeting with independent state food commissions (SFCs) and asked them to give special consideration to vulnerable sections of the society and aspirational districts where development parameters were below normal.

Food Secretary Mr. Sudhanshu Pandey chaired the meeting where SFCs shared their experiences and also took note of the problems being faced by them.

With the implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), where 5kg of foodgrain is allocated per person per month, there was a paradigm shift from a welfare-based approach to providing foodgrains to the beneficiaries as a legal entitlement, said Mr. Pandey.

"Though a lot of progress has been made since the enactment of the NFSA, a lot of ground is still to be covered," he added.

He informed the SFCs that concurrent evaluation of the public distribution system (PDS) was being conducted by institutes of repute.

The SFCs of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand were among those who made presentations. They raised key points such as convergence between departments, provision of adequate budget and staff, need for a single toll free number for complaints, focus on awareness generation and special efforts for tribal areas.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Pandey requested all SFCs to share their experience on their response to the pandemic. He informed the SFCs that the centre was open to the idea of providing financial assistance to the SFCs for awareness generation.

During the meeting, it was emphasised that SFCs have an important role in having a strong oversight on the implementation of PDS to ensure that poor, vulnerable and weaker sections of society are given highly subsidised ration in time and in full quantity.