

## **Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution chairs review meeting with UT Ladakh Administration**

Leh, 15 July 2025: Shri Sanjeev Chopra, Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, chaired a high-level review meeting with the Administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh today in Leh. The meeting was attended by Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh; Shri Bhupesh Chaudhary, Administrative Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; and Shri L. Chatru Naik, General Manager, Food Corporation of India (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Region), along with senior officials from the UT Administration, the Food Corporation of India, and the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

The meeting focused on strengthening the Public Distribution System (PDS) and enhancing food security mechanisms in the Union Territory. A detailed review was undertaken on the linkage of FCI divisional offices with the respective revenue districts to ensure streamlined operations and improved service delivery. The storage capacity and its utilisation, particularly in remote and high-altitude areas of Ladakh, were also discussed, with an emphasis on addressing logistical challenges through infrastructure enhancement.

The implementation status of the Ladakh Food Security Scheme (LFSS) and the National Food Security Act (NFSA) was reviewed in detail. Discussions included procurement progress under LFSS, Aadhaar seeding and e-KYC status of NFSA beneficiaries, and the rationalisation of ration cards. Particular attention was given to identifying and removing bogus or duplicate ration cards and beneficiaries falling within the exclusion criteria of NFSA. The Secretary emphasised the importance of ensuring that only eligible households receive subsidised foodgrain entitlements and stressed the need for Aadhaar authentication of all beneficiaries to eliminate leakages and strengthen the integrity of the system.

The Secretary also appreciated the proactive efforts of the UT Administration in implementing the Ladakh Food Security Scheme, especially the provision of an additional 5 kilograms of foodgrains per month to Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families over and above their NFSA entitlement. He noted that this initiative reflects Ladakh's commitment to ensuring food security and protecting the most vulnerable sections of society, particularly in the face of geographic and climatic challenges.

It was further noted with appreciation that Ladakh is the first Union Territory in the country to implement the SMART-PDS system. This initiative, aimed at modernising the public distribution infrastructure and enabling end-to-end digital tracking of foodgrain delivery, marks a significant step toward transparency, accountability, and efficiency in welfare delivery.

Among those who participated in the meeting were Shri Tahir Hussain; Shri K.L. Meena, Divisional Manager, FCI Ladakh; Shri Sunil Kaul, State Informatics Officer, NIC Ladakh; Ms. Ruth Mary, Assistant Director, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Leh; Ms. Samina Khatoon, Assistant Director, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Kargil; Shri Shujat Ali, TSO RCMS, Leh; Ms. Phunchok Dolkar, Manager, FCI Phyang; and Shri Tsering Toldan, Manager, FCI Leh.

The Secretary concluded by underscoring the need for continued coordination between central and UT-level agencies to ensure robust last-mile delivery and effective functioning of the public distribution ecosystem in Ladakh.

