

People's Union for Civil Liberties

v.

Union of India & Others

(Supreme Court Of India)

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DALVEER BHANDARI HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE  
DIPAK MISRA

Writ Petition (Civil) No. 196 Of 2001 With Ias. No. 90,93, 98, 102-108, 110-  
112, Contempt Petition (C) No. 99 Of 2009 & W.P.(C). No. 277 Of 2010 | 16-  
03-2012

1. In pursuance of the directions of this Court, Dr. B.C. Gupta, Secretary to Government of India, Department of Food and Public Distribution, New Delhi has filed an affidavit. Copies of the said affidavit have been given to the learned counsel for the petitioner and the counsels appearing for other parties.

2. There seems to be a general consensus that computerization is going to help the public distribution system in the country in a big way. In the affidavit it is stated that the Department of Food and Public Distribution has been pursuing the States to undertake special drive to eliminate bogus/duplicate ration cards and as a result, 209.55 lakh ration cards have been eliminated since 2006 and the annual saving of food-grain subsidy has worked out to about Rs.8200 crore per annum. It is further mentioned in the affidavit that end-to-end computerization of public distribution system comprises creation and management of Digitized Beneficiary Database including biometric identification of the beneficiaries, Supply Chain management of TPDS commodities till Fair Price Shops.

3. It is further stated in the affidavit that in the State of Gujarat, the process of computerization is at an advanced stage where issue of bar coded ration cards has led to a reduction of 16 lakh ration cards. It is expected that once the biometric details are collected, this number would increase further. For the present, a reduction of 16 lakh ration cards would translate into an annual saving of over Rs.600 crore. This is just to illustrate that computerization would go in a big way to help the targeted population of the public distribution system in the country.

4. In the affidavit it is further mentioned that Government of India has set up a Task Force under the chairmanship of Mr. Nandan Nilekani, Chairman, UIDAI, to recommend, amongst others, an IT strategy for the public distribution system. We request Mr. Nandan Nilekani to suggest us ways and means by which computerization process of the public distribution system can be expedited. Let a brief report/affidavit be filed by Mr. Nandan Nilekani within four weeks from today.

I.A. No.110/2010:

5. Notice has already been issued in this application. Mr. Gonsalves, learned senior counsel for the petitioner submits that a copy of this application has not been served upon him. Without getting into the controversy, we request the applicant to serve a copy of this application to the learned counsel for the petitioner within a week. Reply to the application be filed within one week thereafter.

6. List this matter on 9th April, 2012 for further directions. I.A. No.82 also be listed on that date.

7. A copy of this order be sent to Mr. Nilekanithrough special messenger.