

Centre urges States not to deny food subsidy for want of Aadhaar card

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, October 26

The Centre has asked States to ensure that beneficiaries are not denied food subsidy if they do not have an Aadhaar card or have not linked it to their ration card.

In a letter to all States, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has also said that no person or household shall be deleted from the list of eligible households and denied subsidised foodgrains or cash transfer of food subsidy due to lack of an Aadhaar card.

"Deletion from the ration card database shall happen only after proper verification of the ration card holder which establishes beyond reasonable doubt that he or she is not genuine," it said in the letter.

The letter comes after an 11-



Linking road Around 82 per cent of ration cards have been seeded with Aadhaar. States have to complete the process by December

year old Jharkhand girl allegedly died of starvation after being denied food under the public distribution system.

Senior officials said that Aadhaar should not become a basis for exclusion. "The benefit must be given if the beneficiary is genuine," said an official.

In case a beneficiary does not have an Aadhaar assigned,

the subsidy should be transferred on production of ration card along with Aadhaar enrolment ID slip or any of the stipulated identification documents, like election cards.

The Ministry has further said that any member of the eligible household will be entitled to receive the entire quantity of food subsidy if they provide the required identific-

ation, irrespective of whether all members of the household have an Aadhaar number.

Further, even if biometric authentication fails due to network or connectivity issue or poor biometric of the beneficiary, he or she will still be provided the subsidised foodgrains or cash transfer by physically producing the Aadhaar card and the ration card.

States and Union Territories should also begin a monthly audit and inspection along with field verification of such beneficiaries to ensure there is no misuse of the relaxation, the Centre has said.

Under the National Food Security Act, States have been given a deadline till December to link Aadhaar with ration cards. At present, about 82 per cent of the ration cards have been seeded with the 12-digit biometric identification number.