

Lokayukta indicts BSY over PDS

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As the Lokayukta probe report on illegal mining has created a political storm in Karnataka and cost Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa his job, another investigation report on public distribution system (PDS) by Lokayukta submitted to the Karnataka Government unravelled a loss of ₹1,738 crores per annum to the exchequer. The PDS investigation report submitted by Justice Santosh Hegde, a day before the illegal mining probe report, has been shadowed by the political hype created in the aftermath of the mining report indicting then BS Yeddyurappa Government of misusing the PDS for the electoral gains and thereby incurring a loss of ₹1,738 crores per annum to the exchequer.

Lokayukta Justice Hegde had appointed a well-known social activist and founder of Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) R Balasubramaniam, who has been working with the tribals for over two decades as the chief investigator to go into the alleged irregularities and corruption in the PDS of Karnataka that finds direct involvement of the then Chief Minister.

According to the report available with *The Pioneer*, PDS in the State shows massive corruption and inefficiency. While the State lost about ₹1,800 crore per year through illegal iron ore trading, it also lost about ₹1,738 crore a year through the PDS.

The report says, "The investigation has unravelled the existence of 159.23 lakh cards against the population of 120 lakh families in the State. The Government of India has recognised 31.29 lakh BPL families, while the investigation revealed that the State has nearly 96 lakh BPL families. More than 49 per cent of the people included in the BPL category are ineligible as per the State's present poverty assessment criteria".