

the last one year prices are almost under control. Compared to the previous year, the prices of most of the commodities are under control. In many cases, prices are coming down also. In certain cases, prices are going up. We are closely monitoring that and we are trying to find a solution to that-

SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN : Mr-Chairman, Sir, the Minister has furnished an impressive list of retail prices in various cities. But the real problem is in the rural areas. Some of the unscrupulous traders raise the prices without any rhyme or reason. The only way to meet this challenge is to build up consumer assistance. What steps is the Government of India taking to build up consumer assistance against these unscrupulous traders? Is it interacting with consumer organisations to build an action plan to meet this challenge?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY : Regarding rural areas, only two things can be done. One is constant vigil by the State Governments. The other is where I agree with the hon. Member we must build up a strong consumer movement in this country. In our country, the consumer movement is just now developing. We passed a legislation only in 1986. The movement is* at the infant stage. However, within this short period of about seven years, we have about 600 consumer organisation?. The Government is now trying to build up the consumer movement all over the country with the co-operation of the State Governments. This year, we have requested the State Governments that they must try, with their own initiative, to form at least one voluntary consumer organisation i

n
one district. I hope that we will be able to build up the movement better. For that, my appeal to hon. Members is, in this area, irrespective of politics, let us all join together to build up a strong rural-based consumer movement in this country. The Government will extend all cooperation to whoever is coming forward in this direction.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 182.

सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से मोटे अनाजों की बिक्री

* 182 श्री सोम पाल :

श्री शारदा महंती :

क्या नागरिक आपूर्ति उपभोक्ता मामले और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से मोटे अनाजों का उपभोग कराने का कोई प्रस्ताव सरकार के विचारार्थ है ;

(ख) यदि हाँ तो इस संबंध में क्या निर्णय लिया गया है, और

(ग) यदि उपरोक्त भाग (क) का उत्तर "नहीं" हो, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं ?

नागरिक आपूर्ति उपभोक्ता मामले और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री और वाणिज्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री का संयुक्त प्रश्न (श्री कमालुद्दीन अहमद) : (क) और (ख) केन्द्रीय सरकार आमतौर पर राज्य/संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों का सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के जरिए वितरण के लिए गेहूँ, चावल, लेबी चीनी, आयातित खाद्य तेल, सॉफ्ट कोक तथा मिट्टी के तेल का आवंटन करती है। हाल के महीनों में कुछ राज्यों का सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के लिए अब तक लगभग एक लाख मी. टन मोटे अनाज का आवंटन किया जा चुका है। मोटे अनाजों की आवश्यकता में आपूर्ति, राज्यों/संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों द्वारा की गई भाग तथा केन्द्रीय पूल में उनकी उपलब्धता पर निर्भर करेगी।

(ग) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

श्री सोमपाल : सम्भाषित महोदय, इस वर्ष एक बहुत दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण स्थिति देखने में यह आई कि जितने भी मोटे अनाज थे, बाजरा, मक्का, ज्वार और जौ आदि सभी के दाम पिछले वर्ष के मुकाबले : से 23 प्रतिशत गिरे और उसका मुख्य कारण : संसदा में यह प्रश्न श्री सोमपाल द्वारा पूछा गया।

यह बताया गया कि इन मोटे अनाजों की सरकारी खरीद का प्रबंध नहीं था। इसी संबंध में कृषि मंत्रालय और कृषि समिति ने अपने इससे प्रतिवेदन में यह कहा है कि सरकार इनकी खरीद का इंतजाम करे और सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली ने इनका वितरण करे। तो मैं सरकार ने यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या इन मोटे अनाजों की खरीद का नियमित प्रबंध किया जाएगा और उन्हें सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से लाभोन्मुखताओं को देश भर में उपलब्ध कराने की व्यवस्था की जाएगी? इस वर्ष कुछ की भी है। क्या इसको नियमित रूप से किया जाएगा नहीं?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A. K.

ANTONY) : The Government wants to encourage the consumption of coarse grain. This year, the production of wheal has gone up. So, the difficulty is, in rural areas, the production has gone up, where people are using the coarse grain and the open market price of wheat is low. As a result, there is not much demand for coarse grain.

Actually we are now trying to entourage the State Governments to popularise this coarse grain. For the first time this year our idea is to procure more coarse grain. From Maharashtra itself more than 7 lakh tonnes of coarse grain has been procured and we have distributed more than one lakh tonnes of coarse grains to various States but so far the response from the States is not that much encouraging. We can dispose more quantities. It depends upon the demand from the State Governments. But we are requesting the State Governments that they should make it a point to popularise this coarse grain all over the country.

श्री सोमपाल : सभापति जी, यह बड़े सन्तोष की बात है कि सरकार इस संबंध में सचेत है, पर मोटे अनाज की जैसाकि मैंने कहा, विशेष स्थिति यह है कि वह कम बर्खा वाले क्षेत्रों में पैदा किए जाते हैं। वही भी कठिनाई यह है कि

छोटे और गरीब किसान इनको पैदा करते हैं और केवल एक ही फसल इनको पैदा होती है क्योंकि गेहूँ, धान और कपास जैसी दूसरी फसलें सिंचाई के अभाव में उन क्षेत्रों में पैदा नहीं की जा सकती और मंदी जो का यह कहता भी ठीक है कि इनकी मांग कम है। इसी संबंध में मैं उनसे यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इनके पास कृषि समिति की एक और सहायता खाई है इन मोटे अनाजों का खपत और मांग बढ़ाने के लिए क्योंकि उनके अंदर खनिज, लवण और खाद्य तेल जैसे पोषक पदार्थों का आदर्श सम्मिश्रण है, तो उसके लिए सरकार क्या करना चाहती है जिससे बिना अपने भोजन में, खाने में इनका अधिक से अधिक इस्तेमाल करे।

SHRI A. K. ANTONY: Sir, I understand (he anxiety shown by the Member about the difficult situation of farmers. Yesterday and the day before I was in Rajasthan. Many farmers told me about this aspect. But this year, as I told you earlier, we have already procured more than seven lakh tonnes of coarse grain but the difficulty is we are not getting that much demand from the State Governments. As a long-term strategy, I feel, the Government also feels, that we must popularise coarse grain more and more because we cannot totally depend on wheat and rice alone because our rice production is becoming stagnant. Unless we popularise coarse grain in more areas, in the long run we will face difficulty. So the Government is aware of this fact and we will do everything possible to popularise coarse grain and we will try to convince the State Governments that they must make it a special point to popularise coarse grain in their areas.

SHRI SARADA MOHANTY : Mr Chairman, Sir, I would like to know whether it is a fact that coarse grains are very good for cattle and poultry-feed and they have an ideal mixture of vital mineral and other nutrients. What is proposed to be done to highlight the qualities of coarse grains to popularise their

use as animal and poultry and fish food and to establish processing industries based on coarse grains in those low rain and drought-prone areas that produce these grains ?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY : Sir, coarse grains are highly nutritious. They are good for human consumption. So, we will examine the ways of popularising them.

SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN : Sir, time and again it has been announced by the Government that the proposal to revamp the Public Distribution System is under consideration. I remember a categorical statement was made by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech to the effect that not only the Government is taking steps to strengthen the Public Distribution System but there is active consideration to revamp the Public 'Distribution System, ' would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any positive steps have been taken by the Government to revamp the Public Distribution System. That is one question.

When there is a demand to include the coarse grain item as part of the Public Distribution System, there is also another request being made particularly by cities like Bombay that higher income group people should not be able to avail of the facilities of the Public Distribution System. I would like to get- the comments of the Minister on these two aspects.

SHRI A. K. ANTONY : Regarding the first question, the Government has already taken steps to revamp the Public Distribution System. As per the initiative taken by the Prime Minister with effect from 1-1-1992 in more than 1,752 blocks throughout the country this public distribution system was introduced.

Regarding coarse grains I have already explained our position. We are trying to popularise it more and more. In regard to elimination of income-tax payers, I would like to say that we cannot take J

a unilateral decision. Already in some States like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana, they have taken steps to eliminate certain higher income groups from the benefit of PDS. Since PDS is a Joint operation of the State Government and the Central Government, the Central Government cannot unilaterally take a decision about elimination of any section. But, at the same time we are very clear and very particular that there should be a national policy on public distribution system. That is why in the recently concluded PDS Advisory Council, we have decided to set up a committee of three Ministers from States with Mr. Vishwariathan, Minister from Tamil Nadu, as its Chairman. The other Members of the Committee are the Minister for Food and Civil Supplies of West Bengal and the Minister from Haryana. The three-Member Committee is now going into details of the targeting of the PDS. After getting their report the Government will examine in detail whether to eliminate any section from the benefit of PDS.

श्री शिव प्रसाद बनपुरिया : सभापति महोदय, मंत्री जी को यह मालूम ही होगा कि कोर्स ग्रेन, मोटा अनाज आदिवासी, हरिजन और निम्न आय वर्ग के लोग ज्यादा खपत करते हैं और मंत्री जी यह कह रहे हैं कि राज्य सरकार इसका प्रचार करे, पापुलराइज करे कि वह लोग इसकी खाएं। मैं आपको जानकारी देकर प्रश्न कहूंगा। ग्रामतीर से हरिजनों, आदिवासियों को मार्ग है, जिस इलाके में हम लोग जाते हैं दौरा करने, कि साहब, पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम में मोटा अनाज नहीं आता, सबका, ज्वार, यह नहीं आता और हमको बहुत कर के महुंगी चीज चावल, गेहूं खरीदना पड़ता है। जहाँ तक यह सवाल है कि राज्य सरकार प्रचार करे, मैं इस तथ्य को मानने को तैयार नहीं हूँ। (व्यवधान)

एक माननीय सदस्य: गेहूं भी तो मोटा अनाज है।

श्री शिव प्रसाद बनपुरिया : गेहूं मोटा अनाज नहीं है। दिल्ली वालों के लिए हो सकता है वह। लेकिन, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि मेहरबानी करके

आप पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम के साथ प्रनिवार्य रूप से गेहूं और चावल के साथ मोटे अनाज की जिस भी रखें। अब, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ भर्ती जो से, इतनी बात कहने के बाद, कि अभी तक मोटे अनाज को सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के द्वारा कहां-कहां उन्होंने भेजने का प्रयास किया है? और कौन-कौन सा जिस उसमें शामिल किया गया है? और, उसकी तादाद क्या है?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY : We have already distributed more than one lakh tonnes of coarse grains to States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maahya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. If there is more demand from States we are prepared to give more quantity of coarse grains. As I said in my reply to the earlier question, we are convinced that we have to popularise the coarse grains. Otherwise, in the long run we would feel difficulty. So, the Union Government has to take all measures to popularise coarse grains. We would request the State Governments also to take more steps to popularise these grains.

SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA : May I submit with all humility at my command that the new Members should be given a little more consideration in asking supplementaries? I have been here for the last one year and during this one year I got only one opportunity. This is my humble submission.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I thought you are a very old Member.

SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA : May I know from the hon. Minister, through you, in addition to monitoring of the Public Distribution System and other matters as stated by my hon. friend, what steps are being taken by the Government to maintain the standard of essential commodities supplied by the Government through the PDS? There are several complaints that sub-standard essential commodities are being supplied which are not fit for human consumption. What steps is the Government taking to check 1097 RSS/94—2.

malpractices in the supply of all essential commodities?

SHRI A. K. ANTONY : Sir, as the hon. Member pointed out, we are getting complaints about the bad quality or articles. For that we have requested the State Governments to conduct more and more surprise checks and continuous verification of the fair price shops. Wherever they find that articles of bad quality are being supplied, the guilty should be prosecuted under the Essential Commodities Act. The Central Government and the FCI are also taking more steps to improve the system.

Inadequate transport facilities for coal

*13. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY† :

SHRI PRAVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a huge quantity of coal is lying at the mines because of inadequate transport facilities; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken so far or propose to take for its early transportation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (Shri A. Jit Kumar Panja) : (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Coal stocks at the pitheads have been increasing with most of the coal companies. One of the reasons for increase in these stocks is mismatch between production and transport capacities in some coal producing areas. Coal companies have been advised to make all efforts to reduce these stocks. They are improving the co-ordination with Railways for improving offtake by rail. To improve the offtake by road, two schemes

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sarada Mohanty.