

Yadav, I am telling you, we will make all endeavours to protect the Government's legal rights to regulate the utilization of gas and its allocation. I am very grateful to all the Members and say that in case any Member has any other query, please send me a note, in two-or three days, I will reply to that. Thank you.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN : Sir, at least one clarification must be allowed; otherwise, there will be no use of making this Calling Attention.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please take your seat...(Interruptions)

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN : At least, one clarification must be allowed, and the hon. Minister must reply, specifically, to that ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please take your seat. The Minister has already stated in the House that whatever points are not replied here, he will be writing to every Member. He has already committed...(Interruptions).. Now, we will take up further discussion on the rise in prices of essential commodities. Now, Shri Gireesh Kumar Sanghi...(Interruptions)... Yes, Yes, Mr. Sen, he will write to you...(Interruptions)....

**प्रो. राम गोपाल यादव** : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने कोई जवाब ही नहीं दिया है...(व्यवधान)... आप पहले से लिखकर लाए हैं ...(व्यवधान)...

**श्री मुरली देवरा** : आप बाहर थे।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Usually, Calling Attention takes one Hour. It has taken more than that...(Interruptions).... He will write to you....(Interruptions)... Please take your seats. I have called Mr. Sanghi. ..(Interruptions)... Mr. Minister, you will reply to every Member, whatever is left. Won't you? ...(Interruptions)... Now, Shri Gireesh Kumar Sanghi...(Interruptions)... Nothing else will go on record except what Shri Gireesh Kumar is saying.

---

#### SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

##### Situation Arising out of continued rise in prices of essential commodities in the country

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, I thank you for having given me the opportunity to express my views on the availability of essential commodities and price rise in the country, which is a very burning subject of discussion. Sir, price rise is a natural phenomenon. Over the years, we have been seeing that either the prices go up or come down. This is based on demand and supply and the market forces. Which apply to this. The Hon. Minister, rightly, state, during his speech in Lok Sabha, that the price rise in our country, when compared to other countries all over the world, is very much in control. The price rise, over the last few years, in our country has been almost to the tune of 16 to 17 per cent, whereas compared to other countries, developed countries also, it was right up to the tune of about 100 per cent.

Sir, I will straightway come to some of the measures taken by our State, the State of Andhra Pradesh, by our hon. Chief Minister, Shri Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. When we talk of price rise, there are two different segments. One segment is the segment which is affluent, which can afford the price rise and which can go to various super markets to buy products of their needs. They want very high quality and high priced products. There is another segment which is our rural folk or our poor folk, and so also the people who are living 'Below Poverty line'. For them, the Government intervention is very much essential. I am confident, and I am sure that the kind of intervention that my State, the State of Andhra Pradesh, has done is highly commendable. I would like to put before this House the various steps taken by our State Government under the leadership of our hon. Chief Minister, Shri Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. Sir, you will be surprised to know that we have about 2 crore 30 lakh ration cards in our State. We supply rice at two rupees per kg., and up to 30 kgs. of rice is given to a family, up to 4 kgs., per head, in family. We supply 10 kgs. of wheat at Rs. 7 per kg; sugar at Rs. 13.50 per kg; kerosene at Rs. 9.75 a litre and Palmolein oil at Rs. 35 per litre. As far as red gram is concerned, we supply red gram at Rs. .30 per kg to each family. Sir, the Public Distribution System, in our State, is working very, very effectively, and there are hardly any cases where people feel that they don't have a ration card. If somebody has got a white ration card, he is also covered under the Rajiv Arogyasri by which his health is also covered; his health is also insured. There are hundreds of ailments which are covered under the Rajiv Arogyasri Health Insurance Scheme; and the beneficiary can walk into any of the corporate hospitals and get himself treated. Since 2007 when this Scheme was started, up till now, our Government has spent on the Rajiv Arogyasri Health Insurance Scheme itself Rs. 1725 crores, benefiting 3 lakh beneficiaries. Now, this Scheme has been extended to 367 hospitals and 942 diseases have been identified under this Rajiv Arogyasri Health Insurance Scheme. Sir, this year, the Government has allocated Rs. 925 crores...*(Interruptions)*....

**श्री विक्रम वर्मा (मध्य प्रदेश) :** सर, यह discssion price rise पर है या health पर है।

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI : Sir, I am speaking on price rise, on essential commodities, on health, on...

SHRI VIKRAM VERMA : You may continue.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Speak on price rise.

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI : Yes, Sir. Essential commodities are also part of it; health is also a part of it. Similarly, our Government has started a new project through which they will be supplying mineral drinking water at two rupees for twenty litres to each house. It is a very unique scheme which the Government of Andhra Pradesh has started. Similarly, Sir, there are many such programmes which the Government has taken up to control the price rise and to support the farmers. Sir, because for the farmers are the backbone of producing agricultural produce, our State Government is spending about Rs. 5600 crores, annually, to give nine hours' free power supply, per day, to about 30 lakh pump sets. These are the various measures that our Government has taken. To benefit the poor people, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has also taken up various innovative schemes like pensions and other initiatives. This is how the Government intervened. Price rise is one thing, but strengthening and benefiting the common man to improve their purchasing power is also an issue directly related to price rise.

Now, Sir, when we talk of price rise, there are several issues related to the Ministry of Agriculture. I feel that there is a lot of gap between the land and the lab. There is a huge gap between what is done in labs and the benefits that people at the grassroots level, the farmers, are getting out of the research done there. There is a lot of gap there and a lot needs to be done in this area. We have to do a lot of research, come out with new seeds, extension work needs to be improved, and so on. Statistics are available to show the yield in our country is very poor. Take any crop's yield in our country; it is very poor. Be it rice, wheat, cotton, pulses or oilseeds, when compared to other countries, the crop yield in our country is very poor. So, our farm practices need to be improved. Our harvesting practices need to be improved. Our land use policy has to be changed. We have various types of land in our country; there are hills, mountains, plains and fallow lands. For each of these land types, land policies must be made according to the availability of resources. Similarly, Sir, irrigation is a big factor when it comes to controlling price rise and availability of commodities. It is directly related to agriculture. I am happy to share with this august House the initiatives taken by our State's Government in this area also. It is through a programme called Jalayagnam where initially 26 projects were taken up with a total outlay 46,000 crores. Later on, we added 81 projects which would irrigate 21,75,000 acres of land. Ultimately, the plan is to bring about one crore acres of land under irrigation. It will definitely strengthen the farmers and increase yields. By increasing the yield, we will be able to supplement the shortfall in supply and reduce the gap between demand and supply. I would like to suggest to the hon. Minister, who is present here, is to ensure that proper extension work is done and the benefits extended to the farmers. The transport system in our country is such that we find that a particular commodity is sold at a very cheap rate in a particular area, the growing centre, while in other centres the same commodity is sold at a very high price. So, proper logistics and transportation also need to be strengthened and enhanced so that we are able to do a better job.

**श्री शान्ता कुमार (हिमाचल प्रदेश) :** मान्यवर उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, आज सदन एक बहुत ही चिन्ताजनक विषय पर चर्चा कर रहा है। मुझे अपने पूर्ववक्ता सांसद की बात सुन कर बहुत हैरानी हुई। महंगाई जैसे विषय के संबंध में इस प्रकार से विचार करना कि यह नैचुरल फिर्नामिना है, कभी बढ़ती है, कभी घटती है, सत्ताधारी दल का इस प्रकार का एटीट्यूड रहने के कारण ही आज महंगाई बढ़ रही है, घट नहीं रही है।

इस बात को भुलाना नहीं चाहिए कि भारत वर्ष में 26 करोड़ लोग गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहते हैं। United Nations Food Programme की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक इस देश में लगभग 20 करोड़ लोग भुखमरी की हालत में रहते हैं, जिन लोगों के घरों में दो वक्त की सूखी रोटी भी नहीं होती है और जिस घर में रात को मां अपने बेटे को यह कहती है कि आज खाने को कुछ नहीं है, पानी का गिलास पीकर सो जाओ। पूर्व वक्ता द्वारा कही इस किस्म की बातें सुन कर वे लोग क्या सोचते होंगे, यह विचार करने की बात है। उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, महंगाई आज आम व्यक्ति की कमर तोड़ रही है। गरीबी रेखा के नीचे रहने वाले लोगों तथा अति गरीब लोगों की टूटी हुई कमर और अधिक टूट रही है। मुझे दुख है कि देश के गरीबों की झोंपड़ी से आने वाली सिसकियों को सुनने के लिए भी सत्ताधारी दल आज तैयार नहीं है। सबसे बड़ी हैरानी तो तब होती है, जब अखबार में यह खबर आती है कि मुद्रास्फीति कम हो गई, एक प्रतिशत पर पहुंच गई, लेकिन जब आम आदमी बाजार में आता है, तब उसको अरहर की दाल 95 रुपए प्रति किलो के भाव में प्राप्त होती है।

सर, मैं बड़े जोर से एक बात कहना चाहता हूँ कि दुनिया-भर में आर्थिक नीतियों का निर्धारण मुद्रास्फीति पर होता है पर भारत में मुद्रास्फीति बिल्कुल गलत ढंग से आंकी जाती है, थोक मूल्य सूचकांक के आधार पर। यहां आम essential commodities और गरीबों की जरूरतों के आधार पर उसको आंकने की कोई व्यवस्था नहीं है। Economic Survey के page 68 पर differences in WPI, CPI-- में उसका एक उदाहरण देता हूँ--उसमें food prices WPI 25.43 और अंत में उपभोक्ता मूल्य agriculture-labour 69.15 है। इस प्रकार थोक मूल्य सूचकांक और खेतिहर मजदूरों के सूचकांक में 45 अंकों का अंतर है। इसी प्रकार से मार्च, 2009 में मुद्रास्फीति lowest 0.8 per cent है, परन्तु खाद्य-वस्तुओं में मूल्य-वृद्धि 10 प्रतिशत है। थोक मूल्य में manipulation होती है, वे manipulate किए जाते हैं। विश्व-भर में केवल 24 देश ऐसे हैं, जो थोक मूल्य सूचकांक के आधार पर अपनी नीतियों का निर्धारण करते हैं और 157 देश ऐसे हैं, जो उपभोक्ता मूल्य सूचकांक पर अपनी नीतियों का निर्धारण करते हैं। सरकार इस बारे में विचार करे। मार्च 2009 में मूल्य सूचकांक 0.44 है, लेकिन खाद्य-पदार्थों के दाम 10.16 प्रतिशत बढ़े हैं। दालें 11 प्रतिशत बढ़ी और चीनी का मूल्य 23 प्रतिशत बढ़ा, लेकिन सरकार ने जो inflation बताया, वह 0.44 प्रतिशत है।

थोक मूल्य सूचकांक 435 वस्तुओं पर आंके जाते हैं और देश के चार बड़े नगरों के आंके जाते हैं, उनका आम और गरीब आदमी के जीवन के साथ कोई संबंध नहीं है। 2007 में एक सरकारी समिति ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में भी यह बात कही थी कि थोक मूल्य सूचकांक सही नहीं है। इसलिए मैं यह चाहूंगा कि सरकार एक बहुत बड़ा आर्थिक सुधार करे। आप जो उपभोक्ता मूल्य सूचकांक भी बताते हैं, वह uniform नहीं है। यह agricultural labour के लिए अलग है industrial labour के लिए अलग है। वह भी भ्रामक है। मैं यह चाहूंगा कि एक आर्थिक सुधार हो और गरीब के साथ, आम आदमी के साथ जो संबंधित भाव हैं, उनके आधार पर इसको तैयार किया जाए। भारत में एक विश्वसनीय मूल्य सूचकांक की आवश्यकता है। आप बताइए कि जो 26 करोड़ गरीब लोग हैं, उनकी आवश्यकताओं के मुताबिक मूल्य सूचकांक क्या है? 20 करोड़ अति गरीब लोग, जो लगभग भूखे रहते हैं, आप उनका उपभोक्ता मूल्य सूचकांक बताइए, तब असली चेहरा सरकार के सामने आएगा। यह सुधार किया जाए, तो हमारी नीतियां ठीक ढंग से निर्धारित होती हैं।

सर, मैं यह कहना चाहूंगा कि महंगाई तो एक लक्षण है, बीमारी तो कुछ और ही है। कुछ तत्कालिक कारण हैं, जैसे-सूखा पड़ गया, वर्षा ज्यादा हो गई, युद्ध हो गया, लेकिन मुख्य रूप से महंगाई के कारण बुनियादी हैं, जिनके कारण महंगाई बढ़ रही है और यह निरंतर बढ़ती चली जाएगी। महोदय, मुख्य कारण हैं गलत व अव्यावहारिक नीतियां, गलत प्राथमिकताएं, inefficient implementation और भ्रष्टाचार। महोदय, उत्पादन बढ़ेगा तब देश आगे बढ़ेगा, तब महंगाई कम होगी, लेकिन उत्पादन बढ़ाने की दृष्टि से जो बातें आवश्यक थीं, उन पर सरकार ने विचार नहीं किया।

महोदय, हमारा देश कृषि प्रधान देश है और जहां 70 प्रतिशत लोग कृषि पर काम करते हैं वहां जो कृषि को प्राथमिकता दी जानी चाहिए थी, वह नहीं दी गयी। आज हालत यह है कि Gross capital formation में, प्रारंभ में कृषि का भाग 23 प्रतिशत था, वह घटते-घटते 6 प्रतिशत रह गया। महोदय, देश आजाद होने के बाद जी.डी.पी. में कृषि का हिस्सा जहां 58 परसेंट था, आज वह घटकर केवल 18 परसेंट रह गया। छठी पंचवर्षीय योजना में निवेश 64 हजार करोड़ था, आज अगर पैसे की कीमत का हिसाब लगाया जाए तो एक और पांच का अंतर है। उस समय जितना निवेश था अगर उस में एक भी नया पैसा न बढ़ाना हो तो भी निवेश 3 लाख करोड़ होना चाहिए, लेकिन निवेश एक लाख करोड़ भी नहीं है।

महोदय, कृषि की पूरी उपेक्षा ही देश की आर्थिक समस्या का सबसे बड़ा कारण है। फिर सिंचाई की उपेक्षा की गयी है। हमारे यहां 142 मिलियन हैक्टेयर में से केवल 57 मिलियन हैक्टेयर सिंचित भूमि है और उस में 55 परसेंट उत्पादन होता है। 5 मिलियन हैक्टेयर भूमि वर्षा पर निर्भर है और उस में केवल 45 प्रतिशत उत्पादन होता है। यही कारण है कि आज उत्पादन में भारत दुनियां के बहुत से देशों से पीछे हैं। मैं देख रहा था, केवल धान में भारत की प्रति हैक्टेयर उपज 3 हजार किलोग्राम है और चीन की 6 हजार किलोग्राम है। चीन हमारे बाद स्वतंत्र हुआ और हमारे बाद एक देश के रूप में खड़ा हुआ तो भी चीन की उपज 6 हजार किलोग्राम है, जापान की 5,800 है। इंडोनेशिया भी हम से ज्यादा है। उस का उत्पादन 4,500 किलोग्राम है। यहां तक कि बंगला देश का उत्पादन भी भारत के उत्पादन से ज्यादा है। उत्पादन के मामले में गलत प्राथमिकताएं तय करने के कारण हम उत्पादन नहीं बढ़ा सके हैं। Egypt का धान का उत्पादन 9,400 किलोग्राम है और हमारा 3000 किलोग्राम है। इस का क्या कारण है? वियतनाम का उत्पादन भी 4,600 किलोग्राम है। इसी प्रकार wheat में भी हम कितने ही देशों से पीछे हैं। ग्राउंड नट में हमारा उत्पादन 938 किलोग्राम है, चाइना का 2,624 किलोग्राम है, जापान का 2,308 किलोग्राम और वियतनाम का 1667 किलोग्राम है। आप देखिए सब से कम उत्पादन भारत का है क्योंकि हम ने कृषि पर ध्यान नहीं दिया, कृषि पर investment नहीं हुआ और irrigation पर जितना ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए था, वह नहीं दिया गया, इसलिए आज हमारी यह स्थिति है।

महोदय, मैं बुनियादी बात कहना चाहता हूं। भारत जैसे देश में कृषि पर जितना ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए था, भारत जैसे देश में irrigation पर जितना ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए था, वह नहीं दिया गया, हमारे यहां irrigation, कृषि बिल्कुल उपेक्षित है जिस के कारण किसान भी खुदकुशी कर रहा है, जिस के कारण किसान खेत छोड़ रहा है, जिस के कारण उत्पादन नहीं बढ़ा है, जिस के कारण गरीबी है, जिस के कारण आज यह महंगाई बढ़ी है।

महोदय, जिस ढंग से यह सरकार प्रशासन चलाती रही है, यह भी महंगाई का एक और बड़ा कारण है। मुझे इस बात का दुख है कि जिस देश में 20 करोड़ लोग भुखमरी की हालत में रहते हैं, जिस देश में 26 करोड़ लोग गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहते हैं, उस देश का प्रशासन नवाबी तरीके से, शहाना तरीके से चलता है और प्रशासन के स्तर पर भयंकर फिजूलखर्ची है। इस में बचत की कहीं, कोई योजना नहीं है। महोदय, मैंने पंचायत से लेकर प्रदेश और यहां के प्रशासन को देखा है। आज भारत सरकार का शुद्ध प्रशासनिक व्यय 4 लाख करोड़ रुपए है। अगर यह सरकार उस गरीब की झोपड़ी की तरफ देखे तो 10 प्रतिशत की बचत कल सुबह हो सकती है। 40,000 करोड़ रुपये की बचत आप तुरंत कर सकते हैं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, 1977 में जब मैं हिमाचल का मुख्य मंत्री बना था और वहां के हालात देख कर बचत की कोशिश की थी तो दो वर्षों के अंदर हमने प्रशासन की 50 करोड़ रुपये की बचत की थी। छोटा-सा हिमाचल। उस वक्त बजट भी बहुत कम था। दाएं-बाएं टेलीफोन कम किये, सरकारी गाड़ियां कम चलानी शुरू की। उस समय मुख्य मंत्री के काफिले में 50-60 गाड़ियां चलती थीं। मैंने कहा कि दो से ज्यादा गाड़ियां नहीं चलेंगी। मुझे पता लगा कि गाड़ियों का सबसे अधिक दुरुपयोग होता है। मैंने यह नियम बनाया कि मुख्य मंत्री के साथ केवल दो गाड़ियां चलेंगी। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

**श्री गिरीश कुमार सांगी** : सर, ...**(व्यवधान)**...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Sanghiji, please take your seat.

**श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि (उड़ीसा) :** सर ...**(व्यवधान)**...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Panyji, please take your seat. What are you doing? Why do you disturb the Member of your own party?

**श्री शान्ता कुमार :** मैंने यह नियम बनाया कि शनिवार और इतवार को सरकार की कोई गाड़ी सड़क पर नजर नहीं आयेगी। इससे 50 करोड़ रुपये की बचत हुई। यह सरकार बचत क्यों नहीं करती? यह गरीब की ओर क्यों नहीं देखती? मैं समझता हूँ कि सरकार अगर इस किस्म से बचत करने की कोशिश करे तो बहुत बचत की जा सकती है। "नवभारत टाइम्स" के एक तारीख के सम्पादकीय में कहा गया है कि चार लाख टन दालें कोलकाता के बंदरगाह पर नष्ट हो गयीं, बरबाद हो गयीं। यदि यह फिजूलखर्ची रोकी जाए तो बहुत बचत हो सकती है।

मैं आपका ध्यान एक और बात की ओर दिलाना चाहता हूँ। सरकार का जो आर्थिक प्रबंधन है, उस पर अंत में मैं एक बात कहना चाहता हूँ। आर्थिक प्रबंधन ऐसा है कि जब मैं इस वर्ष के बजट को देख रहा था - मैं लम्बी बात नहीं करता, केवल दो-तीन आंकड़े सदन के सामने रखना चाहता हूँ। इस बार के बजट में उधारों की अदायगी 3 लाख 43 हजार करोड़ रुपये है, इस साल के बजट में ब्याज की अदायगी 2 लाख 25 हजार करोड़ रुपये है और पेंशन की liability 48 हजार करोड़ रुपये है। मैं इससे आगे नहीं बढ़ा। जब मैंने इन तीन आंकड़ों को जोड़ा तो इन तीन आंकड़ों का योग 6 लाख 18 हजार करोड़ बनता है और हमारे देश की शुद्ध इनकम 6 लाख 14 हजार करोड़ है। यह सरकार अपनी आय में से ये तीन मदें भी पूरी नहीं कर सकती। दूसरे शब्दों में, इसका मतलब यह है कि सरकार अपने कर्मचारियों को वेतन देने के लिए एक-एक पैसा उधार लेगी। रक्षा के मामले पर भी उधार लगी। मुद्दाज पर जो जवान खड़ा है, उसकी बंदूक की गोली खरीदने के लिए भी सरकार को उधार लेना पड़ेगा। ...**समय की घंटी**... तो इस प्रकार का जो प्रबंधन है, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह देख गरीब है। गरीबी की रेखा से नीचे लोग रहते हैं। सरकार का आर्थिक प्रबंधन, सरकार की फिजूलखर्ची और यह जो मनी सप्लाई है, आप 4 लाख करोड़ रुपये उधार लेने वाले हैं। सरकार पर पूरा उधार 28 लाख करोड़ रुपये हो गया है। ये उधार बढ़ते जाएंगे। मनी सप्लाई, फिजूलखर्ची, भ्रष्टाचार, इनके कारण गरीबी और महंगाई बढ़ेगी। मनी सप्लाई केवल भारत में नहीं, अब पाकिस्तान भी नोट छाप कर भारत में भेज रहा है। देश की आर्थिक स्थिति बिल्कुल विकट है। जिस देश में हम अपनी सुरक्षा पर होने वाले खर्च के लिए उधार लेंगे, तनखाह देने के लिए उधार लेंगे, यह कैसा आर्थिक प्रबंधन है? महोदय, क्या यह mismanagement नहीं है? क्या यह दिवालियेपन की हालत नहीं है? यह सरकार तो महादिवालियेपन की हालत में पहुंच गयी है। महंगाई एक छोटा-सा लक्षण है। गरीबी एक लक्षण है, गरीब और अमीर के बीच बढ़ती हुई खाई एक लक्षण है। मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करे। गांव की झोपड़ी में बैठा गरीब महंगाई की मार से बहुत दुखी हो रहा है, इसलिए मेरा यह निवेदन है। इसको सहज भाव से न लें। यह सब जगह बढ़ती है। कभी घटती है, कभी बढ़ती है। ऐसी बात नहीं है। देश का आम गरीब आदमी बहुत परेशान है। सरकार को अपनी आर्थिक नीतियों में आमूल-चूल परिवर्तन करना होगा, तात्कालिक प्रबंध करने होंगे, महंगाई को रोकना होगा ताकि देश का आम आदमी राहत अनुभव कर सके। धन्यवाद।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Now, Mr. P. Rajeeve. Your party's time is two minutes. But, you take five minutes.

SHRI P. RAJEEV (KERALA) : Thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to participate in this discussion. I would not like to repeat the points which have already been raised by other hon. Members. But, I want to add one fundamental point, that is, shortage of foodgrains is not the major reason for the scarcity here. While India has recorded the highest production in foodgrains, the per capita foodgrains availability in this country is less than what it was during the Bengal famine. I would not like to elaborate this point because of shortage of time.

Sir, I would like to focus on my own State, Kerala. Kerala has one of the best public distribution systems in the country. By proper utilisation of this public distribution system, earlier, we had been able to control price rise effectively. But, the situation has changed because of the Central Government's policy. The Central Government is trying to dismantle this public distribution system, firstly, by introducing the targeted public distribution system instead of universal public distribution system and secondly, by introducing the division between APL and BPL. According to the Central Government guidelines, only ten lakh families are under BPL category. So, we are compelled to spend more than Rs. 200 crore per annum to give rice to all deserving families through ration shops. So, the Central Government should reconsider its decision on targeted public distribution system and give rice at BPL price to all deserving families in the State of Kerala. The Central Government is also trying to reduce the rice allocation to the State of Kerala. Now, there is a shortage of more than one lakh tonnes of rice. The State Government has been continuously approaching the Minister to give proper allocation to the State of Kerala. How the Government dare to export rice to South Africa and other countries when the people in this country are under starvation and States are continuously crying for proper allocation of rice to feed our own people? How is the Government dare enough to export rice to South Africa? I suspect the Government has some vested interests and they are not looking at the interests of the people of this country. Now, the Government has decided to temporarily ban export of rice. That is good. But, our demand is, proper allocation of rice for BPL and APL families should be considered positively. The public distribution system in Kerala not only includes ration shops but Neethi stores, consumer stores and festival type of bazaars are also there in the public distribution system. We also have Neethi medical stores to control the medication, that is, reflection of inflation in prices of medicines. So, we, the State, have taken some initiatives to control the prices. The Central Government should have an obligation or duty to give sufficient financial assistance, at least, in the ratio of 50 : 50 to the State of Kerala.

Sir, now, I come to my last point. All of us are aware that Kerala is a consumer State and geographically, it lies at the south end of the country. So, we have to spend more for the transportation cost. So, whenever the oil price rises, it is directly and severally reflected in the prices of commodities. ...**(Time-bell)**... In the answer to the Question No.439 in the Session, the Minister stated that the petroleum PSUs have reported heavy profit after tax. It started from Rs. 656 crores to Rs. 4,848 crores, as per the answer. So, there is no special reason for this oil price rise. So, I request the Government to reconsider this decision (**Time-bell rings**) and take a decision to control prices all over the country. Thank you, Sir.

**श्री अवतार सिंह करीमपुरी** (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह price rise के ऊपर जो discussion है, हमारे ऑनरेबल मेंबर्स ने बहुत से सजेरेंस और आंकड़े दिए हैं तथा reasons भी बताई हैं, मैं उससे थोड़ा हटकर अपनी बात कहना चाहता हूँ। मंहगाई कोई इस तरह की प्रॉब्लम नहीं है, जिसका सरकार के पास कोई इलाज न हो। मैं महसूस करता हूँ कि मंहगाई, सरकार की पैदाइश है। आज हम इसके कारण डिस्कस कर रहे हैं और फिर इसका solution पता नहीं कब सोचेंगे, कब नहीं सोचेंगे। हम यह कहना चाहते हैं कि आजादी के 62 साल बीतने के बाद, हमने दो-चार दिन पहले एक फिल्म दिखाई है—“Slumdog Millionaire” और हम उसको भी सेलीब्रेट कर रहे हैं कि हमारी उस फिल्म ने बहुत से इनाम जीते हैं। इस मंहगाई के कारण कितने ही लोगों के घर चले गए, जो आज

झुगियों में रह रहे हैं। पहले तो हमने वातावरण पैदा किया कि 12-14 करोड़ लोग झुगियों में रहें और फिर झुग्गी सेलीब्रेशन हमने शुरू की है। हम यह कहना चाहते हैं कि हमारे देश का producer जो है, वह labour को exploit कर रहा है, consumers को exploit कर रहा है, क्योंकि producer के लिए हमने कोई ऐसे सख्त नियम नहीं बनाए, जिनके कारण price तय की जा सके। जिसका जो मन चाहता है, वह मनचाही price तय कर लेता है, free hand दे रखा है। मंहगाई की जो मूल जड़ है, वह भ्रष्ट लोकतंत्रीय प्रणाली में है। भ्रष्ट लोकतंत्रीय प्रणाली में मंहगाई की जड़ है। इलेक्शन के पहले पेट्रोल और डीजल का रेट कम हो गया था, पता नहीं कैसे हो गया था, इलेक्शन निकल गया, तो वही पेट्रोल और डीजल फिर मंहगा हो गया। राज करने वाले पहले भी वही थे, राज करने वाले अब भी वही हैं, पेट्रोल और डीजल की कीमत पहले भी वही थी, बाद में भी वही है। क्या यह जनता के साथ धोखा नहीं है? हम यह कहना चाहते हैं कि उद्योगपतियों से, पूंजिपतियों से चंदा लेकर इलेक्शन लड़ा जाता है और इलेक्शन में पानी की तरह पैसा बहाया जाता है। जब हम नॉमिनेशन पेपर्स भरते हैं, तो उसके साथ सुप्रीम कोर्ट की जजमेंट लगी होती है, उसमें सुप्रीम कोर्ट ऑफ इंडिया ने यह दर्ज कर रखा है कि millions of money इलेक्शन में लगाया जाता है और billions of money रिकवर किया जाता है। हम यह कहते हैं कि यह उद्योगपतियों और political लोगों का जो गठजोड़ है, जिसके सामने हमारी पोलिटिकल पावर बेबस है, surrendered है, जिसके कारण मंहगाई आसमान तक पहुंच गई है। आज गरीब लोग खाली पेट सोने को मजबूर हैं। चूंकि अभी बता दिया गया है, इसलिए मैं उसको repeat नहीं करना चाहता हूँ कि आज दालों के रेट क्या हैं और सब्जियों के रेट क्या हैं। शिक्षा सरकार की जिम्मेदारी है। हमारे संविधान के नीति निदेशक सिद्धांत में शिक्षा और हेल्थ की बात दर्ज है, लेकिन हम हेल्थ में क्या जिम्मेवारी निभा रहे हैं? आज कोई कैंसर का मरीज हो, या वह इलाज नहीं करवा सकता। आज हर chronic बीमारी के लिए मेडीसीन का रेट इतना ज्यादा हो गया है कि लोग इलाज नहीं हो ने के कारण, दवाई नहीं लेने के कारण मर रहे हैं। आज विद्या व्यापार हो गई है। जो गरीब है, उसका बच्चा विद्या हासिल नहीं कर सकता है। ...**(समय की घंटी)**... पेट की भूख मिटानी है, हेल्थ को देखना है, शिक्षा को देखना है ...**(समय की घंटी)**...

**उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी. जी. कुरियन)** : कृपया आप समाप्त कीजिए।

**श्री अवतार सिंह करीमपुरी** : महोदय, हमारी सरकार ने compulsory education का बिल भी पास किया है। बिल की हमारे कोई पास कोई कमी नहीं है। अगर बिल को implement करने की will power भी आ जाए, तो हमारे पास समाधान हो सकता है, इसलिए मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार को इस पर जरूर सोचना चाहिए कि सरकार ने उद्योगपतियों के सामने जो surrender किया है, सरकार उस नीति को बदले। सरकार उस नीति को बदले। सरकार बकायदा दाम तय करने की नीति तय करे ताकि consumer और लेबर को उद्योगपति, Producer, आदि जो exploit कर रहा है, उस पर लगाम लगाया जा सके और देश के अंदर भुखमरी और मंहगाई के कारण जो वातावरण पैदा हुआ है, उसको कंट्रोल किया जा सके। धन्यवाद।

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu) : Mr. Vice-Chairman , Sir, we are, once again, discussing a very important issue that is bothering the minds...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Mr. Siva, you have five minutes. Actually, in the 'Others' category, there are 10 speakers. I want to allow everyone. But the total time is 23 minutes. I am giving five minutes each so that everyone speak; otherwise, we will have to cut some names.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Sir, I have always cooperated with the Chair.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : If you cooperate, more people can speak, That is my point.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Sir, we are, once again, discussing a very important issue that is bothering the mind and day-to-day life of the common man whose misery is also soaring high along with the prices. I do not want to repeat what my colleagues have said earlier. I think the basic intention of this discussion is that the views and suggestions expressed by the Members may help the Minister to pull down the prices faster and in a better manner. Last year also, there was a price rise. We had a discussion here, like many other years, as Shri Venkaiah Naidu pointed out. The Government took certain measures to combat inflation, including the ban on export of some commodities like rice and wheat, while allowing duty free imports. The Government had set a minimum import target for the public sector units and had also offered to subsidise some commodities distributed by the State Governments through the Public Distribution System. I do not know what is the outcome. The Minister may, in his reply, tell us as to what are the results we have derived out of that. This year also, the Government has taken some measures. When a question was put last month, the reply which was received was the same which Shri Mysura Reddy received yesterday. And we don't expect the Ministry to change its strategy every month or every day.

So, sticking to that, I would like to seek just three clarifications from the hon. Minister, whose reply, I think, will enlighten the House as well as the people outside. The inflation level on food items could go up in the coming months due to both demand and supply factors. Sir, the agricultural production, this year, could be adversely affected due to poor monsoons, which have resulted in droughts and floods in different parts of the country. On the other hand, with the increase in the availability of money, for obvious reasons, like, the implementation of the Pay Commission recommendations, NREGA and the other Government schemes, the demand would drive up the need for essential commodities. Sir, also, the Reserve Bank, in its Monetary Review Policy on 28th July, has indicated that it also expects a rise in prices at the end of the financial year even though there are no supply shortages. I would like to know what the policy of the Government is in handling this potential increase in prices. The second thing is that there is a variation between the inflation based on the Wholesale Price Index and that based on the Consumer Price Index. This means that though the Government reports a decrease in inflation based on WPI, the Consumer Price Index shows a continued increase in prices of goods relevant to consumers. The main reason for this is that

the basket of goods, used to compute these indices, varies. There are 435 goods in the WPI and 260 in the CPI. At the same time, essential commodities, such as food items, have a higher weightage in the CPI, and it also includes housing, education and transport, which are not included in the WPI. Sir, I would like to quote one thing. "The Consumer Price Indices, for industrial workers and agricultural labourers, taken with all their weaknesses, show a picture of inflation entirely different from that shown by the WPI. Far from stretching to zero or negative levels, the annual rate of inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index, has been averaging just under 10 per cent for industrial workers and over 10 per cent for agricultural workers over the last six months of published data. Inflation in food prices significantly affects a much wider section of the population than industrial workers and agricultural labourers. The poorer the family is, the higher is the proportion of Budget on food and greater is the impact." I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether there is any plan to use the CPI as the main policy indicator rather than the WPI. Thirdly, the Government reports inflation on a year-on-year basis. This means that it compares the present level of the WPI with the one prevailed around the same time of the last year, and announces a difference in percentage. This differs from the best global practices. Most countries report inflation as a change from the previous month, adjusted to, by seasonal fluctuations. Does the Government have any plan to bring in such a system? Sir, this is the federal structure, where the State Governments have a share of the Centres' in everything. We give agricultural loans to farmers at the rate of four per cent, as Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has suggested to the Central Government. We expect that the Central Government would also implement that in order to save the agriculturists as well as the agricultural workers, and thus help in bringing the prices down.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS (Assam) : Sir, retail inflation based on the consumer price index for agricultural labourers and rural labourers has already reversed the declining trend and gone up 9.09 per cent in April, 2009 to 10.21 per cent in May. These are food-heavy indices that underscore the relentless rise in prices of food articles.

As increase in the retail price of petrol and diesel takes place, the retail inflation also starts rising. Again, poor monsoons bring more pressure on prices of food articles like dals and vegetables. Prices of basic vegetables like potato, onions, tomato etc. have shot up. People are paying double the price now. What is worse is, local vendors are taking advantage of the situation and refusing to reduce the prices. The Government attitude towards such a situation is very casual.

4.00 P.M.

The total pulses production of 14.9 MT in 2007-08 fell to 13 MT in the year 2008-09. Prices of black gram, pigeon peas, yellow gram and chana dal shot up by almost 20 to 50 per cent overnight. International prices of pulses are high and the dollar is now strong against the rupee. that is why private traders are not importing pulses. Therefore, my suggestion is that the Government should on its own import pulses to control the spiralling prices. On top of this, wholesale traders are hoarding stocks in order to make profits later. The Government is silent. I want to know whether any action has been taken by the Government against such traders so far. The State Food and Civil Supplies Department should also wake up from its slumber and devise an effective monitoring mechanism to keep a watch on prices of essential commodities and look into traders' justifications for effecting any hike. There is lack of coordination between State Governments and the Central Government in taking any such effective steps. Government should revamp the PDS that has been in the doldrums and that is beset with widespread corruption. The Government should establish a mechanism to check such arbitrary and unreasonable price increases. It is the failure of the Government and the administration of not having any control on the market. I want to know whether the authorities have ever put to test the claims of the trading community vis-a-vis prices at source and the rates of increase in prices. The Government authorities have totally surrendered before the traders' lobby.

Sir, we, the people of Assam, are facing grave problems; we face great disparity. As you know, Sir, the people of Assam are facing a serious law and order situation. There is a perennial flood problem. Again now, people are facing drought in every district of the State. The hike in prices of essential commodities is causing great despair to the *aam admi* in the State. The Government should take immediate and effective steps to curb rise in the prices of essential commodities. It is urged upon the Government to provide dal and edible oil at subsidised rates through the public distribution system and to restore Above Poverty Line (APL) categories as an interim measure towards universalisation of the Public Distribution System (PDS).

**सरदार तरलोचन सिंह** (हरियाणा) : शुक्रिया, सर। हम यहां पर price rise की बात कर रहे हैं, लेकिन एक बात हम सब भूल जाते हैं कि आबादी स्पीड से बढ़ रही है। उसके संबंध में कोई कुछ कहने के लिए तैयार नहीं है। हर रोज हम बात करते हैं कि इतने करोड़ new mouths added, लेकिन कोई पॉलिटिकल पार्टी यह कहने के लिए तैयार नहीं है कि population की तरफ भी ध्यान दें। जब production इतनी ज्यादा increase हो रही है, तो फिर price rise को आप welcome करिए क्योंकि खाने वाले बढ़ते जा रहे हैं और production उतनी ही है। दूसरा, बात बड़ी क्लीयर है कि जिसने production देनी है, वह कौन है? वह farmer है। जिस चीज़ की आप बात कर रहे हैं, सिवाय ईट, सीमेंट और लोहे को छोड़कर, बाकी सबमें फार्मर involved हैं। मुझे खुशी है कि आज जो Minister of Agriculture है, वे खुद एक farmer हैं। बेसिक बात को समझिए कि आप farmer को दे रहे हैं, वह short measures हैं कि कभी थोड़ा सा यह दे दिया। कभी थोड़ा सा वह दे दिया, कभी थोड़ा सा वह दे दिया एक बार आपने loan waiver दिया है, लेकिन उसमें क्या discrimination है कि जो सबसे अच्छा farmer है, उसको नहीं मिलेगा। वहां पर भी वही पॉलिसी है कि गरीब को पहले मिलेगा। भाइयों, एक बात समझिए कि जिस farmer ने लोन वापस दिया,

उसको कोई क्रेडिट नहीं है। जो नहीं देता, उसे कहते हैं कि तुम्हें हम देते हैं। सवाल यह है कि जा अच्छा फार्मर है, एफिसिएंट है उसको आप इंसेंटिव दो, उसको कहो कि तुमको डबल इंसेंटिव मिलेगा, लेकिन उसको तो कहते हैं कि तुम्हें कुछ नहीं मिलेगा और यही हुआ है कि जो आपने फार्मर स्कीम दी है, इसमें जो सफर है वह पंजाब और हरियाणा है। हमें पंजाब में तो सिर्फ 1.5 परसेंट बेनिफिट मिला है और हरियाणा में दो परसेंट मिला है। हमारे फार्मर को तो बेनिफिट मिला ही नहीं, क्योंकि हमारा फार्मर अपना लोन वापिस करता था। इसलिए जो लोन वापिस करता था अब वह घर में बैठा है। जब आप इंसेंटिव नहीं देंगे तो फार्मर से एक्सपेक्ट क्या करेंगे? मेरी दूसरी बात यह है कि फार्मर को आप हमेशा के लिए लोन की प्रोब्लम से फ्री कीजिए। सर, एक कंप्यूजन और है कि जो इन्होंने नई कमेटी बनाई है, जो फार्मर मनी लेंडर से पैसे लेता है, उसके बारे में ही फैसला करेंगे। I have written to the Union Finance Minister also. उसमें एक क्लॉज है महाराष्ट्र की। अब हमें सिर्फ यह लग रहा है कि यह स्कीम सिर्फ महाराष्ट्र के लिए है, बाकी स्टेट्स के फार्मर्स के लिए नहीं है। इस तरह हमें confuse है कि वह जो स्कीम दे रहे हैं सिर्फ एक स्टेट के लिए है। If it is for all India, then, please announce it. ताकि अन्य को पता चले कि they will also be free from the yoke of moneylenders. मिनिस्टर साहब, फार्मर्स के लिए के लिए ऐसी बात करिए जिससे उनका लोन चार परसेंट हो। इसके अलावा उनको जो बीच वगैरह की सब्सिडी दे रहे हो, उसको बढ़ाइए। अगर फार्मर हमेशा के लिए इन चीजों से फ्री होगा तो डबल प्रोडक्शन करेगा। इन सारी प्रोब्लम्स का हल फार्मर्स की सेटिस्फेक्शन है और फार्मर्स को आप क्या देते हैं?

Sir, my next issue is wastage of food. अब इसके क्या हाल हैं, मिनिस्टर साहब को पता है। पंजाब और हरियाणा में पिछले साल की प्रोडक्शन आज भी पड़ी हुई है। आपने उसको रिमूव नहीं किया है, इसलिए कि स्टोरेज केपेसिटी कम है, रेलवे ट्रेन की, वैगन की अवेलेबिलिटी कम है। जो स्टेट व्हीट और राइस प्रोड्यूस करती है और यह जिन स्टेट्स को जाना है, वहां उन स्टेट्स में स्टोरेज केपेसिटी नहीं है इसलिए मूवमेंट भी नहीं है। वेस्टेज की फिगरस मिनिस्टर साहब को पता है। अगर वह वेस्टेज खत्म हो जाए तो शोर्टेज है ही नहीं तथा प्राइज राइज होगा ही नहीं। There should be more storage capacity, and movement of foodgrains which are still lying there, और उसको कई जगह चूहे खा रहे हैं, अन्य जगह गनीबैग्स फट गए हैं, बारिश से परेशानी हो रही है। इसलिए भी आप मूव नहीं करते। हरियाणा और पंजाब की सरकारें आपको लिख रही हैं - प्लीज मूव करिए नई फसल आ गई है उसका क्या करें?

सर, थर्ड आइटम मिल्क के बारे में है। मिल्क की प्रोब्लम क्या है। यह सबसे बड़ी स्कीम है जो इंडिया में कामयाब हो सकती है। If every farmer, irrespective of हमारा क्या है, यह तो बी. पी. एल हो जाएगी। जो अब स्कीम आ रही है वह बिलो पावर्टी लाइन के लिए है। जो एबव पावर्टी लाइन हैं, तो वह कहां जाएं, उनको आप क्या देते हो? कोई इंसेंटिव देते हो? अब हर रोज यह नया नारा है - वोट बैंक की बी.पी.एल लाइन। अगर मिल्क प्रोड्यूस करना है, तो जिसकी केपेसिटी है उसको लोन दो, ताकि और केटल रखे और पैदा करे। जिनको देते हो वहां तो कहीं पैसा मिस-यूज हो जाता है। अगर स्कीम चलानी है तो इसमें आप वह देखें who is efficient, who can do it. **समय की घंटी** बस एक मिनट लूंगा। मंत्रालय की एक फिगर छपी है, जिसमें यह लिखा है कि जो प्राइस राइज है, वह डिफ्रेंट स्टेट्स में डिफ्रेंट है और यह इनकी अपनी फिगरस है। इसमें लिखा है कि चेन्नई में दाल की प्राइस 97 परसेंट बढ़ी है, बाकी अन्य देशों में बहुत कम है। इसी तरह ऑनियन की प्राइस है। कोलकाता में पोटेटो की प्राइस 200 परसेंट इंक्रीज हुई है। There is a disparity between different cities. Who is responsible for it? The Government is responsible for it. इसी वजह से मूवमेंट नहीं होने के कारण से चेन्नई में और, कोलकाता में और, दिल्ली में और तथा मुंबई में और प्राइस हैं। इसलिए आप मूवमेंट कीजिए। आप कहते हैं कि डेली ट्रेन चल रही हैं, तो ट्रेन इस काम के लिए भी चलाई जाएं, जो हर जगह इसको ले जाए। थैंक्यू।

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, as the discussion on inflation and price rise is being debated, I did not have the privilege of listening to the Members directly sitting here, but I had the opportunity of listening to some of the observations made by the hon. Members, sitting in my room in Parliament House, and also from the notes which we have received. Various aspects have been raised by the hon. Members. I would like to deal with some of the issues in general terms. The detailed reply would be given by my distinguished colleague in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs.

Sir, first of all, I would like refer to the point, as has been pointed out by several Members, that inflation is because of the bad management of economy. Yes, it is our responsibility to manage the economy in such a manner so that the supply and demand management have some equilibrium and if that equilibrium is lost, naturally, it would adversely affect.

The second question that has to be kept in view while participating and trying to analyse the reasons for the price rise is that the entire situation does not depend on the domestic management policy. There is also a global factor. We may like it or we may not like it, but no economy in the world, today, is insulated from the external influence and that external influence also causes inflation or deflation in the economy.

The third factor is the seasonal factor; our economy is dependant, to a considerable extent, on the monsoon; particularly the agricultural economy on the seasonal factor; and, it is not unusual that every year, at a particular point to time, we find that there is a tendency of the enhancement of prices in certain groups of commodities; these are usually being described by the economy as 'seasonal factors'.

The fourth aspect which has to be looked into is how to insulate the vulnerable sections of the society from the adverse impact of rising prices because they are the worst hit. No doubt, certain policies lead to inflation; or, there are certain Government policies and programmes which have the inflationary trend. Take the case of minimum support price mechanism. If we want to give a remunerative price to the farmers, which is absolutely essential to encourage them to produce more, to meet the requirements of the growing population, there is no carpet under which you can keep the impact of it. What best you can do is, you insulate the vulnerable sections of the society by providing subsidies through a certain mechanism. And the mechanism which is prevailing here in this country is the Public Distribution System. If through the effective Public Distribution system, channelising the subsidies which are being provided to the targeted group, is effectively implemented, to that extent, we can achieve success in insulating a section of the society from the adverse impact of rising prices.

Now, as per the present practice-I am not going into the merits-economists may give their views and theories; I am not going into that aspect of it; surely, that can be discussed. The current practice which is being followed in this country is -- it is our Government, it is their Government, the practice is in vogue over the decades. All India averages of the wholesale prices and retail prices of 16 items are being monitored by the Department of Consumer Affairs, and from there we arrive at the decisions about the price index. So far as the WPI is concerned, it is vetted; averages of 435 commodities traded in the wholesale market are classified in three categories. Each classification has each group as weightage. Primary articles have the weightage of 24.02 per cent. The second category is fuel, power and light. They have weightage of 14.23 per cent. Third category is the manufactured items, which has a weightage of 63.75 per cent. All these taken together come to 100 per cent distributed in three categories of commodities, primary commodities, primary articles, fuel, power, power, light and manufactured items.

Always there is a point, which has been raised, as to why there is serious divergence between the Wholesale Price Index and the Consumer Price Index. The question is very legitimate and the answers are also being given because the weightage is different. The type of weightages, which you have in the Consumer Price Index and the type of weightage of the commodities, which you have in the Wholesale Price Index, are completely different. For example, in the Wholesale Price Index, sometimes you take the food items; the weightage of the food articles in the Wholesale Price Index is 25 per cent. The total weightage of the primary articles, as I have mentioned, is 22.02 per cent and of that if you take it as 100, the food items will be 25 per cent. There are four categories of the Consumer Price Index. There is Consumer Price Index for the industrial workers, there is Consumer Price Index for the urban non-manual employees, there is Consumer Price Index for the agricultural labour, and there is Consumer Price Index for the rural labour. For historical reasons, these four Consumer Prices Indices are being maintained over the years. Now, I am giving the example of the food items. The weightage in the WPI is 24.4 per cent, for the industrial workers the weightage is 46.2 per cent and for urban non-manual employees, it is 47.1 per cent, Consumer Price Index for the agricultural labourer is 66.8 per cent and Consumer Price Index for the rural labour is 69.2 per cent. Therefore, if you go item-wise, you will find that the large variation in the weightage is there and that is why you will find that always there is convergence. But earlier our experiences had been that the convergences would have emerged after the divergence parallel lines moving for quite some time, at some point of time there has been convergence. But recently, we are noticing that convergence point is being delayed and this is an area of concern, which ought to be looked into. Therefore, these aspects are engaging our attention and we are taking care of it.

The second question comes and which has been legitimately demanded and also is being debated now is that why we are maintaining two sets of indices and whether we can have one set of Indices. So far as WPI is concerned, it is mainly for the traders who have been trading in the

wholesale market. The question legitimately addressed whether there is need of four sets of Consumer Prices Indices. In fact, this issue was addressed by the CSO out of these four series. The CSO maintains one series, that is, for the urban non-manual employees. But for rural labour, agricultural labour, and industrial workers, these Indices are being maintained by the Labour Bureau not by the CSO. But CSO was asked whether a mechanism could be evolved through which instead of having four series of indices, we could have only one. They found it extremely difficult but still they are working on it. And the Central Statistical Organisation has asked them to look into that aspect. I understand that some discussions are still going on at the expert's level, and they are trying to emerge. The second aspect which was thought of, was: what are the steps which you are going to converge into one set of index? And what is the international practice? We have found that a large number of countries have only one set of index, particularly the developed countries; that is Consumer Price Index. But, obviously, you will recognise, Sir, and the hon. Members who are knowledgeable will also recognise that the variations of development in our society are so divergent that one set of consumer price index will not meet the requirement of the entire community or a big chunk of the community. Whatever indices you try to attain, you will find, as I mentioned, that in two important segments, food items is having are weightage of 66 and 68 per cent in respect of the agricultural labour, in respect of the rural labour. Therefore, you cannot simply ignore these aspects. So, variations would be there. Now, if the variations are there, and if, at least we maintain the WPI and CPI, efforts are being made, as I mentioned earlier, to look into whether instead of having four CPI; we could have one CPI.

The second aspect about the food management, as I was saying, is that there are certain policies. Here, what would you do? We cannot go back and say, farmers will not get back the prices', every year. If you make a comparison, you will find that we have enhanced the procurement price of wheat by almost Rs. 350, per quintal, and paddy price, by Rs. 300, per quintal, over a period of five years. But, the demand is much more. Farmers are demanding more, and farmers are to be provided and given remuneratives pricess othat they produce more. No country of the world can feed 115 plus crore people. Nobody can feed. India will have to be self-sufficient in food production, in meeting its own requirements. Then a question comes : Are we taking adequate steps? Are we doing enough for the agricultural development? Of course, the answer will be given by the Minister in-charge of Agriculture, Consumer Affairs and Food. Only one point. I would like to emphasise is that during the Eleventh Plan, this aspect has been recognised. There is no denail to the fact and it is not passing on the buck to this Government or to that Government. Over the period of the last 10 to 15 years, as the public expenditure in the agriculture sector was not substantially high, we had to pay a very heavy price because the agricultural growth has retarded. It has not matched the requirement and the component in the GDP. Of course, in a developed economy, primary commodities contribution of agriculture will have to be reduced and the other sectors like service sectors, manufactured items, industry, will have to take a more and more higher place but agriculture has a

place. That is why it was recognised that, at least, at the level four per cent, if for a longer period, we do not maintain the sustained development of agriculture in real terms around four per cent plus, then it will be difficult to have the balanced growth, which has the objective of 'inclusive growth', through which every strata of society can get benefit on of it. I now come to the questions that have been raised by some hon. Members in respect of what you are going to do if you cannot control inflation. Everybody recognises that we depend on external sources for our fuel requirements. Nearly, 3/4 of our total fossil fuel requirements are coming from the external sources. We do not have the control over it. It has been calculated, at the present level of indigenous production and if the present level of consumption fossil fuels and hydrocarbons continue at this rate, at the end of Eleventh Plan and during the 12th Plan, the requirement would be almost 90 per cent. Today, it is 72-75 per cent. But, after sometime, it would be around 90 per cent. Therefore, we are exploring the possibilities of alternate sources of energy where our dependence on the external sources of energy could be reduced to that extent. Various measures are being taken. But, that is outside the purview of the current discussion.

Sir, the short point to which I am trying to drive at is, these are the factors which are contributing. Now, to remove distortions in the demand and supply mechanism, we are taking steps. Hon. Members will recollect, during this period or a little earlier of the previous year, the rate of inflation was so high that the Government had to resort to a tight monetary policy. Too much money chasing too few goods is the normal traditional example which the economists give to explain the inflationary impact. The Government had to resort to tight monetary policy. The liquidity in the market was reduced and after that the impact of the global recession and the series of other steps which we had to take had its adverse impact. Today, if the WPI is negative, it is not so much depending on the policy formulations of the Government. The substantial difference which takes place in the case of one item -- I can give many examples -- is oil price. The oil price, in August, 2008, has reached as high as US \$ 147 per barrel. It came down to almost US \$ 40-45 dollars per barrel or US \$ 50 barrel in the month of last May/June, 2009. Again, it has started moving up and reaches to around US \$ 68-70 per barrel. It is varying. It is uncertain. Nobody can predict at what point of time it will again shoot up. One of the major reasons is there is international recession. Industrialised countries are not going to consume more oil. I expected that the oil prices should have further depressed. But, there is an apprehension that even though there is a demand, but, as there is strong dollar and the possessors of the dollar are converting their dollar into some sort of commodities -- of course, this is a speculation of the economists; it may be true or it may not be true, but, there is some suspicion -- as a result of which, certain commodity prices are stepping up.

Another important factor in the rise of prices was last year's totally unbridled rise in the prices of certain essential commodities, including food items. Now-a-days, the world is too small. Everybody knows everything. The total global production is known to the villagers living in remote corners of India. Sir, be it agricultural production or industrial production or whether it is the trend of the GDP in different countries, advanced countries, developing countries or least developed countries, all the

information is readily available and depending on such information, they take their own decisions. There is no way you can insulate that this type of information will be not available and action, arising out of information, cannot be prevented. But, still, what could be done in a given situation, we are doing it. For example, we have taken a series of measures to insulate the adverse impact of inflation on the common man.

The first thing that we had decided for maintaining the equilibrium in the prices of primary articles, particularly, the foodgrains was this. A ban was imposed on the export of foodgrains. Import was allowed liberally including that of sugar. Sometimes, it caused a real embarrassing situation; I will give you another example. Last time, because of the shortage of edible oil, we had decided to import about a million tonnes of edible oil, and a few hundred thousand tons were earmarked to be distributed at one kg per ration cardholder, with a subsidy of Rs. 15/- per kg. The States were asked to lift this quantum of edible oil and to distribute it through their Public Distribution System. But hardly any State Government took it, and we had to pay a very heavy dose of subsidy. After all, money is coming from the people. Therefore, supply management, demand management, making availability of goods in short supply through imports, etc.-- all these steps are being taken in a timely manner. As and when these steps were taken, it had some impact on the prices.

Now, there is another question which has been raised more than often is, -- the Minister of Agriculture will reply it in detail; I will just like to touch upon it -- why cannot you have the legal measures against the hoarders, profiteers and black marketeers? At one point of time, this power was taken by the Centre, but, in 2006, we decided that the power should be vested in the State Governments. They are in a better position to assess the situation and also to take appropriate steps and it has been given to them. Therefore, they can take it. The two aspects which, in cooperation of the State Governments and their effective handling, are, absolutely, called for are as follows. One is the effective public distribution mechanism and the second is de-hoarding, or these types of malpractices which are taking place. There are certain issues which have been raised about banning the Forward Contracts. When it was found that the prices of certain items, particularly, on a speculation basis, were being raised, the ban order was issued by the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Therefore, all these steps are being taken as and when the situation demands it. It is not that the situation remains static. A question was raised, because of the bad management, economy is not growing. Economy is growing. Economy has grown. For the full five years, we attained an 8.6 per cent GDP growth. Because of bad management, it was not possible. Knowledge Members of this House are fully aware of that. So far as GDP is concerned, we have a long-chequered history. In 1951, we began our development planning. From 1951-1979, our GDP growth was 3.5 per cent. In the 80's, it was five per cent. In the 90's, it was 6.5 per cent average. Thereafter, we reached a growth syndrome of 8.6 per cent in the previous five years. This year, it has been less, that is, in 2008-09, it is 6.7 per cent, because of an international crisis, a global phenomenon. And, because of that, we had to inject Rs. 10,086,000/- liquidity into the system, which did not get immediately

converted into production. That also has an impact on the overall monetary expansion system. So, you will have to do the management to strike a balance. Sometimes, you will have to tighten it, sometimes you will have to loosen it. As and when the economy demands, you will have to do it. This time, the vegetable prices, the milk prices and the prices of a lot of other articles have been increased because the monsoon is erratic, which is causing concern to all of us. It has its symptomatic impact on certain other essential areas also.

All these aspects will have to be handled. We are sensitive to it. I fully appreciate the concerns of hon. Members who represent the various cross-sections of the people. The ultimate interest of everyone of us is to see how we can ameliorate the sufferings and difficulties suffered by our fellow citizens through appropriate policy means. So, through you, Sir, I can assure the hon. Members that the Government is responsible, the Government is responsive; as and when the appropriate policy measures are needed, it will be taken. Thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity.

**श्री शान्ता कुमार :** सर, मुझे consumer price index के बारे में एक बात कहनी है .....(व्यवधान)....

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : The reply will be given by him; I was just intervening.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : It was just an intervention.

**श्री शान्ता कुमार :** क्योंकि इन्होंने जवाब दिया है कि ...(व्यवधान)... Just one minute ...(*Interruptions*)...  
One minute, Sir...(*Interruptions*)....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : I will give you time before the Agriculture Minister replies, because the final reply will be given by the Agriculture Minister. That is only an intervention ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VIKRAM VERMA : Sir, about the inflation rate, I think, the Finance Minister can explain very well.

SHRI SHANTA KUMAR : Just one minute, Sir, एक बात तो यह है कि consumer price index ज्यादा realistic है। दूसरी यह कि दुनिया के 157 देश consumer price index का उपयोग करते हैं और केवल 24 देश whole-sale price index का उपयोग करते हैं। तीसरी बात यह कि आप consumer price index 4 वर्गों का अलग-अलग निकालते हैं, uniform नहीं निकालते। इस देश के हालात का विचार करते हुए अगर आप BPL के 26 करोड़ लोगों का consumer price index अलग से निकालेंगे ...(समय की घंटी)... तो वह ज्यादा realistic होगा। क्या सरकार इस पर विचार करेगी?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : I have answered it. In my reply, I said that I have appointed a Committee.; the CSO is looking into it to see whether these four sets of consumer price indices could be converged into one Consumer Price index, the CPI. I have already replied to that. Sir, 24 countries are still having the WPI. Please remember, except China, there is no other country where so many people are there, so many divergent economic conditions are prevailing, which do not get reflected in only one series of indices of the consumer price index. We shall have to be practical. Therefore, so far as CPI is concerned, we are trying to converge four into one, and so far as WPI is concerned, the wholesale traders' practices, will also continue parallel. There are no two opinions on it.

SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT (Maharashtra) : Sir, I heard the hon. Finance Minister's speech with great care. He has given a macro level explanation of what happened. Though his explanation is perhaps correct, but, I am afraid, this type of macro-level thinking does not satisfy the last-level consumer, the person in the village, and doesn't help the poor housewife who has to meet the ends at home. Sir, I was surprised when I heard hon. Tarlochan Singh saying that all the loan waiver schemes are aimed at providing relief to only Maharashtra. Dr. Waghmare is sitting next to him. I suggest you to talk to him. In Marathwada, is the poor and the real farmer being helped by this scheme? Has his loan been waived or is it just a slogan that the Government has given?...*(Interruptions)*...

SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH : Sir, I want that the Scheme should be for the whole of India...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT : I understand what you are saying. On the one hand, the farmer is left to the mercy of God, and, on the other hand, the consumer is annoyed and dissatisfied. Mr. Minister, you are sitting on a volcano of anger. The consumers in rural areas and the consumers in urban areas are dissatisfied; they are angry. Last week only, housewives in Mumbai came out on the streets protesting against the price rise. What does that indicate? It only shows that people in Maharashtra in particular and the nation in general are angry with you. If you don't take action now, this volcano would erupt and it will take its toll on the Government.

Sir, everybody has talked about the rise in prices of essential commodities, foodgrains, pulses etc. There are many reasons which the Government can cite; it may say that the prices rose because of drought and because of some other reasons. I am bringing something else to your notice: There are domestic consumption items such as toothpaste, powder, toothbrush, OTC medicines etc. They have nothing all to do with rains. They are not produced in the farms. I would request all of you to go home and check the label on the toothpaste pack in your house. There is an MRP printed on that. That MRP has been crossed and a new MRP has been stamped. Why is that so? Why is there a price hike in these items which have nothing to do with rains? This does not have anything to do with global meltdown. It has nothing to do with crude oil prices. Why should these prices be raised? There is a raked going on among the distributors and the retail vendors. Where is the extra margin going? Who is consuming that? Where is that extra money going? That money is not in thousands or lakhs; it is in crores. It is a State-wide and nation-wide phenomenon. These FMCGs are sold from house to house and the cream is enjoyed by somebody else. It is the responsibility of the Government, the Minister, to see where this money is perforating. Where is the seepage? Who is eating away this money? Only then the consumers at large would be satisfied.

Sir, I have one more point to make. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that the public distribution system is further strengthened and these items are sold at fair-price shops. Only then the last consumer would get some respite from price rise.

Sir, I would like to again tell you that people's anger is on the rise. People are angry and dissatisfied. If this anger is allowed to rise further, we would be inviting anarchy. We have to save this country from this anarchy. Therefore, price rise has to be curbed and it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Shrimati Kusum Rai.

**श्री राजनीति प्रसाद (बिहार) :** सर, मेरा पॉइंट ऑफ ऑर्डर है। When the hon. Minister has replied in detail, what is the use of arguing on the same things.? What is the use?...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please, take your seat. It is no point of order. It is the hon. Member's maiden speech. Please, do not disturb.

**श्री राम नारायण साहू (उत्तर प्रदेश) :** बहुत-बहुत बधाई।

**श्रीमती कुसुम राय (उत्तर प्रदेश) :** सर. आप का आभार व्यक्त करती हूँ और धन्यवाद देती हूँ कि आप ने मुझे बोलने का अवसर दिया। इस अवसर पर मैं अपने सभी सम्मानित सदस्यों का सहयोग भी चाहूंगी, अपनी पार्टी के लीडर्स का भी सहयोग चाहूंगी।

महोदय, अभी हमारे नेता आदरणीय शान्ता कुमार जी ने अर्थ-व्यवस्था को यहां बड़े अच्छे तरीके से रखा है। उन सभी आंकड़ों से मैं अपने को संबद्ध करती हूँ, क्योंकि उन आंकड़ों को मैं दोहराना नहीं चाहती। आज जब मैं बोल रही हूँ तो एक गृहिणी के नाते भी बोल रही हूँ। जिस तरह से मंहगाई बढ़ी है और जिस तरह से आज घरेलू महिलाएं परेशान हैं, पहले तो यह होता था कि अरहर की दाल मंहगी है तो हम मसूर या मूंग को विकल्प के रूप में बना लेते थे, लेकिन आज ऐसी स्थिति हो गई है कि मसूर का दाम भी आसमान छू रहा है और मूंग का दाम भी आसमान छू रहा है। गरीबी की रेखा से नीचे जीने वाले लोग यह सोचने के लिए मजबूर हो रहे हैं, वे सुबह से शाम तक यह सोचते रहते हैं कि आज हम क्या खाना बनायें और कम बजट में अपने परिवार को हम कैसे पाल सकें? हमारे सभी सदस्यों ने बहुत आंकड़ों के साथ इस विषय पर बोला है। मैं आपके माध्यम से कृषि मंत्री जी और सरकार से यह कहना चाहूंगी कि जिस तरह से आवश्यक उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं के फुटकर भाव बढ़े हैं। अरहर की दाल मंहगी होने पर आम आदमी मूंग, मसूर और चने की दाल के तौर पर उसका विकल्प ढूँढ लेगा, पर आलू, प्याज जैसी सब्जियों का क्या विकल्प है? वर्ष 2004 के मुकाबले गेहूँ के बाजार भाव में 60 प्रतिशत, चावल-दाल के दामों में 50 प्रतिशत और खाद्य तेलों में 40 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि हुई है। इसके अलावा, आम आदमी के अन्य सामाजिक खर्च भी होते हैं। इतनी मंहगाई में आम आदमी कैसे जिन्दा रह सकता है?

महोदय, पिछले एक साल में प्रति व्यक्ति आय में जितनी वृद्धि हुई है, उसकी तुलना में 300 प्रतिशत आवश्यक उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं के दाम बढ़े हैं। एक स्टडी रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक गेहूँ, दाल, चाय, चीनी, मसालों आदि के दाम पिछले एक साल में 19 प्रतिशत बढ़े हैं, जबकि औसत घरेलू आय सिर्फ 6 प्रतिशत बढ़ी है। स्टडी रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक निकट भविष्य में गेहूँ, दूध और दूध से बने उत्पादों के मूल्य में वृद्धि होगी।

महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से यह पूछना चाहती हूँ कि क्या 8 से 10 हजार रुपये मासिक आय पाने वाला व्यक्ति मंहगाई में अपने परिवार का पेट भर सकता है? 8 से 10 हजार रुपये या इससे ज्यादा बहुत कम लोगों की आय है। नरेगा में आप सिर्फ 100 रुपये की मजदूरी ही देते हैं। इस हिसाब से लोगों की आय सिर्फ 3000 रुपये

मासिक होती है। पिछले साल 'नरेगा' का राष्ट्रीय सालाना औसत सिर्फ 48 दिनों का ही रहा है। अब सरकार और सरकारी तंत्र अपनी अंतरात्मा से यह पूछ ले कि क्या अब भी सरकार का हाथ आम आदमी के साथ है? आज समाज के निचले तबके की स्थिति आजादी से पहले के बंधुआ मजदूरों से भी खराब है। कोई मजदूर दिन भर 'नरेगा' के तहत मजदूरी करके अगर 100 रुपये कमाता है तो वह अपनी दिन भर की कमाई से 2 किलो आलू और 2 किलो प्याज ही अपने घर में ला सकता है। क्या यही निगेटिव इन्प्लेजेशन है?

महोदय, महंगाई इसलिए नहीं बढ़ी है कि मांग और आपूर्ति का गैप है, बल्कि इसका कारण जमाखोरी और कालाबाजारी है। ऐसा भी नहीं है कि बढ़ी हुई महंगाई का फायदा किसान को मिल रहा है, जो अपनी मेहनत से अनाज पैदा करता है। उसे तो बाजार भाव का सिर्फ 1/3 भाग ही मिलता है। इसमें दो-तिहाई फायदा तो जमाखोर और बिचौलियों को होता है, क्योंकि वे बाजार को अपनी इच्छा के अनुसार मैनीपुलेट कर आर्टिफिशियल शॉर्टेज पैदा कर देते हैं और सरकार कुछ नहीं करती है। सरकारी तंत्र इसको रोकने की बजाय इसमें उनकी मदद करता है। एक ईमानदार आदमी जो ईमानदारी से टैक्स देता है, वह लाइसेंस, परमिट और इंस्पेक्टर राज से परेशान है, पर जमाखोर और कालाबाजारी करने वाले गलत करते हुए भी बचे रहते हैं। सरकार अगर इच्छा-शक्ति रखे और ईमानदारी से काम करे तो महंगाई रोकी जा सकती है। आप कृषि उत्पादों को बिना - कृषि मंत्री जी यहां पर बैठे हैं, अगर वह वास्तव में महंगाई को रोकना चाहते हैं तो जो किसान है, उसे बिना किसी टैक्सेशन और रुकावट के एक राज्य से दूसरे राज्य में अपने उत्पाद को बेचने का अधिकार दे दें। इससे किसान को अच्छी कीमत मिलेगी और उपभोक्ता को भी सस्ते दाम पर अनाज मिलेगा। राज्य किसानों के उत्पादन पर टोल टैक्स और अन्य टैक्स बंद कर दे। FCI और अन्य गोदामों में प्रॉपर चैक नहीं है, जिसकी वजह से कालाबाजारी को रोका जा सके।

महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से यह कहना चाहूंगी कि सरकार के पास ऐसे एक्ट हैं, जो जमाखोरी को और कालाबाजारी को रोक सकते हैं। मैं कहना चाहती हूँ कि सरकारी तंत्र, कालाबाजारी और जमाखोरी करने वालों की मिलीभगत को समाप्त करने के लिए प्रभावी कदम उठाए जाएं और सरकार को अपनी महत्वपूर्ण नीतियों के क्रियान्वयन और मॉनिटरिंग के लिए नीतियां बनानी चाहिए।

अंत में मैं सरकार से एक बार और आग्रह करूंगी कि आवश्यक वस्तुओं की महंगाई को सरकार सिर्फ आंकड़ों की कलाबाजी से नहीं बल्कि वास्तव में रोकने का प्रयास करें, ताकि आम आदमी को अपनी अंतरात्मा से महसूस हो सके कि सरकार का हाथ वाकई उसके साथ है। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Thank you. Congratulations Shrimati Kusum Rai. You made a good speech. Your maiden speech was a good speech. Now, Shri Arjun Kumar Sengupta. But, you have to stick to time.

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA (West Bengal) : How much time? Five minutes?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : You need five minutes? Okay, you take one more minute.

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA : That is more than enough. I don't want to speak too much on this subject because this subject has been very much spoken about and the Finance Minister has already discussed the intricacies of price indices and all that. This House is quite grateful to him for explaining all this. But the fact of the matter is, the Minister is present here, yes, we know what is

actually happening. The question is : What are we doing to control prices? The issue, as the Finance Minister has pointed out, and I am absolutely certain that Sharad Pawarji will also say the same thing that first our attempt is to see whether these prices can be controlled. Obviously, the prices cannot be controlled in a situation where there is a production shortfall and where there is an international situation against you. Then, the question is : How to protect, at least, a section of the people from the adverse effects? The Finance Minister talked about *Aam Aadmi*. This is a question of common man. How do you protect that? Sir, this is a point I want to raise, and I hope the Minister-in-charge will be able to answer that. We need to have some kind of a long-term mechanism because this is going to happen again and again. It is not just a one-time phenomenon. It is not happening just because monsoon is failing this year. It happens with the change of the demand pattern and recession. So, this is expected to happen again and again and we must have a proper mechanism to tackle it.

The first mechanism is, of course, the public distribution system. The public distribution system is something which needs to be strengthened. Particularly, in view of the delivery mechanism, lot of criticism has been there. I hope that the Minister will be able to assure us that steps are being taken to see that the public distribution system runs without much complicity.

The second point is, in spite of all this, there will be a lot of speculation. Now, Sir, I do not believe that the speculation in the market can be arrested by sheer force, although after a point, if there is too much of hoarding, the State Government should take certain action. I am sure, the Central Government will support the State Governments to do that. But, this is not going to be the answer. The answer will have to be a financial answer to this question. I am sorry, the Finance Minister has already left, but we have to find some fiscal methods and incentives to see that speculation is arrested. We had till this year a commodity exchange tax. This was a transaction tax. Transaction taxes are meant to prevent unnecessary speculation. Unfortunately, this tax has been withdrawn. There are many reasons for that. Most probably, the reason was that it was introduced last year by Mr. Chidambaram, but he did not really try to implement it. I am requesting the Government, through the Minister present here and to Finance Minister to re-consider introducing this again. Specially now, with the view of the shortage in monsoon, there is definitely going to be a short pressure or speculation. This particular measure will not only add revenue but also be, to some extent, not to full, effective neutralisation on the speculative measures.

The third point is, and on this point, Sir, I would like a serious consideration. In a country like ours, we have got huge foreign exchange reserves and ability to import goods, and most of these goods are, what you call in economics 'tradable goods'. We may not be able to produce them at home. But they are produced somewhere in the world. Of course, there is a price factor. If you try to import much, the prices will go up. But that is for the Finance Ministry to see how to finance that import and how to subsidise that import.

But there must be a permanent regular mechanism which should know when to import; how to import; and which are the parties with which you should actually deal with.

For this purpose, I am suggesting the Minister to seriously consider creation of a Commodities Exchange Corporation or a Commodities Trading Corporation. It will not be like the Food Corporation of India. This particular corporation should be able to procure, say, dal, sugar and several other things, from home and from the world with a complete access to import market. The Government will only give it the assurance that if it is forced to sell or if it is persuaded to sell at a price lower than the import price, then the Government will subsidise it. Otherwise, this particular corporation will fend for itself.

If we have a large corporation with a huge amount of working capital, it should be able to get into the market at the right time and play against the market. Those of us who have been in this area for a long time know how the old thinking of the Government has changed. There was a time when the Government seriously considered taking the wholesale trade to be nationalised. Because when shortage is there, trade is a major factor, which has to be arrested, which we cannot do. We have now come out of that nationalisation spree, as Murlidhar Deora was saying. We are not talking about that.

Therefore, we are saying let us play in the market. But let the public sector play the counterforce of the market. Come forward with enough resources, play in the market, and then this particular corporation can get upto a long-term contract.

In petroleum sector, if we are not producing it at home, we can get into a long-term import contract with producers who can produce it. There are many small countries in Africa which would be able to produce *dal* for us if we have a long-term contract. If we have a long term contract with even some domestic producers, it will give us stability. This particular corporation should have sufficient financial resources to enter into the type of long-term contract and play in the market properly as a big trader. I am sure that will have an immediate effect. Thank you, Sir.

DR. BARUN MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : Sir, we have had enough of statistical jugglery, particularly regarding inflation figures. A couple of months ago and in the last year also, when we were eagerly reading newspapers in the morning, we were looking for inflation rate. We saw it gradually going up and then it reached at 12 per cent. But after that, when it reversed, it reached zero level and even negative level. But to our utter shocking surprise, we have found that it surpassed all our expectations, and the prices of essential commodities have not gone down. It is the shocking surprise.

Now we are listening to a lot of explanations and seeing the difference between the Wholesale Price Index and the Consumer Price Index. But, at that time, it was not discussed. The main thing is this. People are not bothered about this statistical jugglery. They are mainly concerned about prices of essential commodities. All my hon. colleagues here highlighted how the prices of even vegetables,

edible oil, sugar, pulses, medicinals, etc., have steadily gone up. The price of these articles has reached such a stage that it is beyond the reach of the common man, the poor working class. The middle class families are not able to manage their household necessities at this precarious stage. So, it is essential and many a time, we have been demanding universal public distribution system. In this respect, only the targeted public distribution system will not do. It is not enough that only the people Below Poverty Line are given subsidised food items. Even the common people, middle class and APL people also need subsidised food commodities. Otherwise, they cannot survive. One main thing that we have been highlighting many a time is, a positive steps should be taken against hoarders and people involved in forward trading or speculative trading. But, unfortunately, no such positive step has been taken. I believe, our hon. Members may recall that once the then Prime Minister, Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru, had said, "I will hang the black-marketeers and hoarders publicly on the lamppost." Perhaps, the present Government is far away from that line of thinking. But, the basic fact remains that hoarders and speculative traders have an important role to play in inflating the prices of essential commodities. It is high time to ban forward trading and speculative trading. It must be done.

Moreover, one basic factor behind it is, the declining trend of agricultural productivity. It has declined steadily. Once it was six per cent. Then, it came down to 1.4 per cent. Now, of late, the Government has declared that the target is four per cent. But, it has not been clarified in what way they plan to reach the target of four per cent of agricultural productivity (*Time-bell rings*)... Even now, if we depend on monsoon, that will be very unfortunate. At this stage of developed technology, we have to think otherwise. We would like to say that there should be proper planning to build up the enough stock of food. As and when necessary, we shall have to import necessary food items at reasonable or competitive price, not in a fire-fighting measure. When there is acute crisis, you will be importing these things at more than twice the price of the present market price. On the other hand, proper planning should be done for building up food stock and its scientific preservation. Definitely, about the distribution, the targeted PDS will not suffice...(*Time-bell rings*)... We must go in for universal public distribution system. Otherwise, people will have no relief from this soaring and spiralling price rise. Thank you very much, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Now, Shri Sharad Anantrao Joshi...(*Interruptions*) What can I do? There is paucity of time. Otherwise, I would not have rang the bell.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI (Maharashtra) : Sir, the present discussion on the situation arising out of continued price rise started on the 4th. We have had a semicolon where the Finance Minister intervened to bring out the aspects that concern the financial management. Sir, before the discussion started, I was in Vadodara, Gujarat when the *turdaal* price had reached Rs. 100 and people were really scared. This morning, newspapers show that price of *turdaal* has reached Rs.140

5.00 P.M.

in Andhra Pradesh. So, it's not only the absolute level of prices, but, the speed and the rate at which prices are increasing from day-to-day which is causing scare. Sir, the Finance Minister tried to maintain that this is not on account of bad economic management and what I am going to say, Sir, is precisely the opposite that it is bad overall economic strategies and management which is resulting in this kind of rise in prices. Sir, the Finance Minister has very correctly said that this is a question of demand and supply management. It is the demand and supply management...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Just one minute. Please bear with me. There is a Half-an-Hour Discussion to be taken up at 5.00 p.m. If the House agrees, we can take it up later.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand) : Sir the concerned Member is sitting here. It can be deferred.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Yes, we will defer it.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : There is this important business of price rise.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : If that is the sense of the House, we will defer it. The Member also agrees. The Member is very cooperative.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka) : Sir, he is a very good man as long as he is on this side.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Do you want to keep him there? They will not allow that. So, that is agreed. Please proceed.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI : Sir, although the Finance Minister took 40 minutes to explain that it was wise financial management and economic management, I have hardly four minutes to disprove him. It is essentially bad economic management and bad equilibrating of supply and demand under what is called "inclusive economy". I may try to make it as simple as possible. The fiscal packages that have gone into the anti-recession measures, the Sixth Pay Commission, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes and all the Flagship programmes have resulted in pumping of incomes into the hands of a certain class. Now this class is consuming certain things which it was not consuming in the same proportion earlier. These are commodities which are being consumed largely..(Interruptions)... Sir, I seek your protection. If you are giving me only five minutes, I would ask you to give me protection. For example, the commodities where the prices have gone high are pulses, oil-seeds, edible oils, sugar, milk and milk products. These are all commodities which are consumed by the lower middle class or the middle middle-class or the upper middle-class which now the *aam admi* has started consuming. That is the reason why the prices are going up and that is the reason why the housewives in Mumbai are coming out and they are the ones who are feeling the pinch of this aggression by the *aam admi* into the commodities that have been consumed exclusively by them.

Sir, there is another factor. The NREGS and other schemes, and the Sixth Pay Commission have made agricultural labourers scare. The reason why the pulse prices are going up is also largely due to the fact that pulse is a highly labour-intensive produce. It requires a lot of labour and it involves a lot of cost. So, it is precisely those commodities that are consumed almost exclusively by the upper middle-class which are now having a higher demand and in lesser supply because of high cost of production. This is resulting in a mismatch between the demand and supply. I would try to illustrate it by a simple micro model. If Rs. 6,500 are spent from Delhi on any project, according to the report of the Planning Commission, only Rs. 100 reach the *aam admi*. When Rs. 100 reach the *aam admi*, he spends about Rs. 70 on food articles. To produce Rs. 70 worth of food item, you require a direct investment of about Rs. 200. To make this Rs. 200 reach the farmers, you require 65 times more than that amount, that is Rs. 13000. For every rupee you spend on *aam admi*, unless you spend Rs. 2 for encouraging production of those things, it would be seen that the inclusive economics is untenable, and it will always result in inflation and high cost. I often said that inclusive economics is politically a clincher, but it might prove to be an economic flop. Thank you.

**श्री मंगल किसन (उड़ीसा)** : धन्यवाद, उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय। आज देश में हर चीज की कीमत बहुत बढ़ गयी है और बाज़ार में चीज़े नहीं मिल रही हैं। आम आदमी, जो साधारण आदमी है, उसे अपनी जिंदगी में चावल गेहूँ, दाल, प्याज, आलू, लहसुन खाने को तेल, नमक आदि की जरूरत है। उसके साथ थोड़ा प्याज आलू, लहसुन और साग-भाजी एक आम परिवार के लिए जरूरी है। आज 77 परसेंट population इसी के बीच में लटकी हुई है और इसके आगे वह कुछ भी सोच नहीं सकती है। जब बारिश ठीक होती है तो ये साधारण चीज़ें, जो आम आदमी के लिए जीने के लिए दरकरार है, जीवन के पोषण के लिए जरूरी है, वे मिल जाती हैं। जब मौसम में थोड़ी गड़बड़ होती है तो शाक-भाजी के दाम से लेकर हर चीज़ के दाम बाज़ार में बढ़ते चले जाते हैं और आम आदमी को परेशान होना पड़ता है। महोदय, पानी के बिना खेती संभव नहीं है। जैसे मछली बगैर पानी के जिंदा नहीं रह सकती है, उसी तरह irrigation में बिना पानी में पैदावार में वृद्धि होने की कोई संभावना नहीं है। आज तक भारत सरकार ने irrigation को state subject मानकर, उसके प्रति जो ध्यान देना चाहिए, वह नहीं दिया है। स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के पास इतना धन नहीं है कि खेती योग्य जमीन की सिंचाई के लिए 100 परसेंट पानी का प्रावधान कर सके। आज सिंचाई का percentage अगर हम देखें तो पंजाब और हरियाणा को छोड़कर वह 35 से 40 परसेंट के बीच में अटका हुआ है। हम चाहें NREGA बनाएं या कितने भी प्रोग्राम बनाएं, लेकिन हर आदमी को जिंदा रहने के लिए दाल रोटी चाहिए। उसको और कुछ नहीं चाहिए, केवल दाल-रोटी चाहिए। दाल-रोटी के बिना आम आदमी का जीना मुश्किल है। जब दाल-रोटी नहीं मिलेगी तो हर जगह भले लोग भी आंदोलन करेंगे, मजदूर लोग आंदोलन करेंगे, middle class आंदोलन करेंगे और सब लोग आंदोलन करेंगे। जो बुनियादी चीज़ है वह पानी है। पानी के बिना खेती संभव नहीं है। इस विषय पर भारत सरकार को सोचना चाहिए और irrigation facility बढ़ाने के लिए, जिस तरह से सरकार ने NREGA में पैसे का जुगाड़ किया जाता है, उसी तरह से स्टेट गवर्नमेंट को 100 परसेंट irrigation facility मुहैया कराने के लिए सेंट्रल बजट में सपोर्ट होना चाहिए। बिना सपोर्ट के केवल दाल-रोटी खोजने से कहां मिलेगी? गेहूँ-चावल खोजने से कहां से मिलेगा? जब पैदावार होगी, तब जाकर हम लोगों को दाल, रोटी, गेहूँ, चावल और तेल आदि सब कुछ मिलेगा। Without having irrigation facilities, there cannot be good agriculture. That is why the Government should provide irrigation facilities to the people. Then only this burning problem can be solved; otherwise; हर साल इसी प्रकार डिस्कशन होती रहेगी और इसका समाधान नहीं होगा। ...**(समय की घंटी)**... एक आखिरी बात पीडीएस सिस्टम के संबंध में कहना चाहता हूं। मैं केवल एक मिनट लूंगा। यह पीडीएस सिस्टम गेहूँ, चावल, चीनी इत्यादि में फेल हो चुका है। आज non-government mechanism बाज़ार को कंट्रोल कर रहा है। यह non-government mechanism जो बाज़ार को कंट्रोल कर रहा है, उसको पकड़ना पड़ेगा, तब जाकर जितना भी गोदामों में चावल और गेहूँ है, वह मार्केट में आ सकता है और कुछ राहत मिल सकती है। धन्यवाद।

DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE (Maharashtra) : Sir, our country is passing through hard times. We are facing recess on the one hand and inflation on the other. And, this is quite a paradoxical situation. We are grappling with the problem of skyrocketing prices of commodities which are essential for living. This problem has, however created an extraordinary situation which is unprecedented in nature and far-reaching in effect. Prices have been on the rise over the years. But, today, the problem has assumed great seriousness. The failure of monsoon has aggravated the gravity and grimness of the problem. All the forecasts regarding monsoons have proved false and futile. The failure of monsoon has caused a widespread drought across the country. As a matter of fact, drought is a major cause steep rising of prices of essential commodities this year. All parts of India have been badly hit by drought creating an apocalyptic situation in this country. Never before has India witnessed such a tragic situation. The common man, in whose name and honour we run the Government, is on the brink, and the situation has to be faced very squarely. The *Aam Admi's* plight is indeed very pathetic. His survival itself is in danger. He may get bread, but where is the dal to eat it with? The price of dal is beyond his capacity, even beyond his imagination. Wheat and rice, we have in stock, but pulses we do not have. The Government should procure pulses even at high prices. The farmers should be induced to grow more pulses. The Government should indicate the requirements of essential commodities every year along with incentives to farmers. The pattern of crops should be rapidly and radically changed. The condition of the people, who are below the poverty line, is indeed very pathetic. We have 260 million people below the poverty line. They are unfortunately undernourished. Most of them suffer from malnutrition. The Government has implemented the Employment Guarantee Scheme for the BPL people. But the Employment Guarantee Scheme does not mean Food Guarantee Scheme. The Employment Guarantee Scheme should mean 'Food Guarantee Scheme'. For this, the Government should take two measures; first, it should ensure employment to BPL people for 365 days. Second, it should undertake a massive 'Food for Work Programme'.

But we cannot ensure food security unless we ensure work security. Work should be made a Fundamental Right, like, primary education. Right to Life is a Fundamental Right in the Constitution. Without Right to Work, Right to Life has no meaning. Right to Education has emanated from the Right to Life. Right to Work also emanates, let us clearly understand, from the Right to Life. Let us aim at it.

Sir, it is a fact that the peasantry of this country has always been below the poverty line; it is the peasantry who provides food to us. The farmers have to feed not only their families, but also their cattle. The widespread drought in the country has created the problem of fodder and water. Fodder security is no less important than the food security. The Government should face this problem squarely and very urgently. When the farmers become helpless, they sell their cattle to the butchers. This is how they solve the problem of fodder and water. This year is going to be a very dark year. I would like to call it the Eclipse year because we are facing this food problem. The Government should leave no stone unturned to curb the price rise of essential commodities. The Government must have the political will. Thank you, Sir.

**श्री राजनीति प्रसाद :** धन्यवाद सर। भाई शिवानन्द तिवारी जी, कभी-कभी अच्छी बात बोल देते हैं। हमें अच्छा लगा कि उन्होंने पुरानी बातों को याद किया। हम लोग बहुत पहले एक गाना सुनते थे कि दाल, रोटी खाओ प्रभु के गुण गाओ। लेकिन अब दाल भी गायब है और रोटी के बारे में तो सोचना ही नहीं है।...(व्यवधान)...

**श्री एम. वेंकैया नायडु :** अब केवल प्रभु है।...(व्यवधान)...

**श्री राजनीति प्रसाद :** हां, प्रभु है। ...(व्यवधान).... जब हम लोग बोलते हैं, क्या तभी आप लोग बोलते हैं?  
...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : I hope, Shri Sharad Pawar has heard him.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : You have only five minutes. You don't get distracted. You address the Chair.

**श्री राजनीति प्रसाद :** सर, पांच मिनट में से तीन मिनट तो ये ही ले लेते हैं।...(व्यवधान).... सर, मेरा टाइम अब शुरू होता है। मैं एक सजेशन देना चाहता हूं। यहां पर कृषि मंत्री जी बैठे हैं। जो पीडीएस का डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन है, उसको पूरे हिन्दुस्तान में ठीक कर दीजिए, उसका रख-रखाव ठीक कर दीजिए, तो हमारे ख्याल से मूल्य में जरूर कुछ कमी आ जाएगी, इसमें कोई शक नहीं है। जब पीडीएस का ही डायवर्सन हो जाएगा, दुकान पर पहुंचने से पहले ही उसका डायवर्सन हो जाएगा, तब मूल्य में वृद्धि होगी, इसमें कोई शक नहीं है। हम लोग समाजवादी आंदोलन से आते हैं। हम लोग नारा देते थे - जब तक भूखा इन्सान रहेगा, धरती पर तूफान रहेगा। इसके अलावा एक नारा और देते थे - रोको महंगी, बांधो दाम, नहीं तो होगा चक्का जाम। अब यहां चक्का जाम नहीं होता है। महंगी के बारे में कोई विचार ही नहीं करता है।...(व्यवधान).... हम लोगों का सारा समय कैसे-कैसे जाता है, मैं तो इस बात पर हैरान हूं, लेकिन हमारे यहां लोगों को खाना नहीं मिलता है। अब NREGA की बात है। अगर इसमें काम करने वाले लोगों को रोज सौ रुपये मिलेंगे, तो हम जो चावल खरीदने जाएंगे, हम जो गेहूं खरीदने जाएंगे, हम बाजार में जो सब्जी खरीदने जाएंगे, उसी दाम में यह समान उसको भी मिलेगा और उसी दाम में हमको भी मिलेगा, चाहे हम पार्लियामेंट के मेम्बर हैं। उसको सौ रुपये मिलते हैं और हमको बीस हजार या 16 हजार रुपये, जो भी तनखाह है, उसमें क्या अंतर है, इसको देख लीजिए। श्री अर्जुनसेन गुप्त की जो किताब है, उसमें लिखा है कि 75 परसेंट का बीस रुपया रोज के काम चलता है, तो 20 को एक महीने में multiply करिए, वह कितना आता है? उसको भी वह उसी दाम में खरीदना पड़ेगा। इस पर माननीय मंत्री जी को विचार करना चाहिए।

सर, आप मुझे ज्यादा समय नहीं देंगे। इसलिए मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से कहना चाहता हूं कि आप पीडीएस सिस्टम को मजबूत कीजिए। सुश्री मैबल रिबेलो जी ने जो सजेशन दिया है, वह बहुत बढ़िया सजेशन है। वह कहती है कि गोदाम से सीधे अनाज पीडीएस की दुकान पर पहुंचना चाहिए, क्योंकि अगर वह सीधे दुकान पर नहीं पहुंचेगा।...(व्यवधान).... यह आपके यहां पहुंचता होगा, सब जगह पर नहीं पहुंचता है। अगर वह डायरेक्ट नहीं पहुंचता है, तो बीच में उसका डायवर्सन होता है। मैं शिवानन्द तिवारी जी की इस बात से सहमत हूं कि बाजार में और एफसीआई के गोदाम में माल की कमी नहीं है, लेकिन आप उसको कहां-कहां दे देते हैं, किसको दे देते हैं, यह समझ में नहीं आता है। हमारे वित्त मंत्री जी ने यहां पर कहा कि थोक मूल्य में और कॉमन मूल्य में फर्क है। उन्होंने चार तरह के मूल्य बताए। हमारे यहां चार तरह के मूल्य का कोई मतलब नहीं है। वह थोक विक्रेता का क्या मूल्य है, उससे आम लोगों को कोई मतलब नहीं है, थोक विक्रेता का जो मतलब है, उससे सब लोगों का मतलब नहीं है। उससे कॉमन मैन का क्या लेना-देना है? कॉमन मैन को तो उसी से मतलब है, जो बाजार में बिकता है और शॉप पर बिकता है। सर, मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि इस बारे में जरूर विचार किया जाए। मैं एक और बात कहना

चाहता हूँ...(व्यवधान)... खत्म हो गया? सर, एक मिनट रुकिए...(व्यवधान)... ऐसा मत करिए। आप जो कहते हैं, हम मान लेते हैं। सर, मैं एक बात और पूछना चाहता हूँ कि नार्थ एवेन्यू में चावल के दाम और दाल के दाम एक सौ रूपए प्रति किलो है, अगर हम सफदरजंग में जाएंगे, तो पाएंगे कि वहां पर इनके दाम 90 रुपये हैं। हम कहीं और दूसरी जगह पर जाएंगे, तो पाएंगे कि इनके दाम 70 रूपए हैं। इसका क्या मतलब है? यहां पर सब्जी किलो के भाव से खरीदी ही नहीं जाती है, बल्कि हम लोग यहां पर सब्जी पाव के भाव से खरीदते हैं। जो सब्जी हम अपने घर में बाजार से किलो के भाव पर खरीदते हैं, यहां पाव में मिलती है। हमने पूछा कि सब्जी का भाव कितने रूपए किलो है, तो उसने कहा कि यहां किलो नहीं बल्कि पाव मिलती है, यानी सब्जी किलो नहीं मिलती है, पाव में मिलती है। इसलिए इसके बारे में जरूर विचार करना चाहिए। अगर आप महंगाई को रोकना चाहते हैं, ...(समय की घंटी)... तो जो आपका mechanism है, आप उस पर दबाव डालिए, तभी महंगाई रुकेगी। ...(समय की घंटी)...अगर महंगाई रुकी तो ठीक है, नहीं तो फिर चक्का फिसल जाएगा और दिक्कत हो जाएगी। धन्यवाद।

**श्री राम नारायण साहू :** सर, सदन में जो price rise पर चर्चा चल रही है, आपने मुझे इस पर बोलने का समय दिया, इसके लिए आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद। आज देश में जो चारों ओर दिक्कत और परेशानियां आ रही हैं और इस पर सभी लोग अपने-अपने विचार प्रकट कर रहे हैं कि देश किन-किन परिस्थितियों से गुजर रहा है, तो यह सरकार की गलत नीतियों के कारण है। यह सरकार जुगाड़ लगाकर चलाई जा रही है। ...(व्यवधान)... सरदार जी, आप समझिए। कभी तो लेफ्ट फ्रंट का सहारा लिया जाता है और कभी समाजवादी पार्टी का सहारा लिया जाता है। ...(व्यवधान)... अब ऐसे लोगों का सहारा लेने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है, जिन लोगों ने सरकार को paralysis की हालत में पहुंचा दिया था, ताकि जुगाड़ बना रहे। ...(व्यवधान)... आप सीनियर आदमी हैं। सर, अब महंगाई चरमसीमा पर है और बड़े घरानों की मदद पीछे के दरवाजे से की जा रही है। आज गरीबी की हालत क्या है, इस पर लोक सभा ने एक पिक्चर दिखाई थी। लोग तो उस पिक्चर की तारीफ कर रहे हैं और सरकार भी कर रही है, तभी तो सरकार वह पिक्चर दिखा रही है। मीडिया भी उस पिक्चर की तारीफ कर रहा है। उस पिक्चर को सात या आठ ऑस्कर पुरस्कार दिए गए हैं। ...(व्यवधान)... आपने पिक्चर नहीं देखी? आपको वह पिक्चर देखनी चाहिए थी। सर, जो यूरोप व पश्चिमी सभ्यता वाले देशों के लोग हैं, वे यहीं काम किया करते हैं। उन्होंने लगान को प्राइज दिया नहीं, जोधा अकबर को प्राइज दिया नहीं, बल्कि एक ऐसी पिक्चर को प्राइज दिया है, जिसमें भारत को काफी गिरी हुई स्थिति में दिखाया गया है। कल हमारे एक सदस्य कह रहे थे कि हम आधा घंटा पिक्चर देखने के बाद बाहर चले गए। ये पश्चिमी देश हमेशा एक राजनीतिक चाल चला करते हैं। आप सभी लोग जानते हैं, जब पश्चिमी देशों की बात आ गई तो बताना ही पड़ेगा। उन्होंने देखा कि इंडिया में कॉस्मेटिक की डिमांड बहुत ज्यादा है। उन्होंने एक साथ पांच, छह मिस वर्ल्ड, मिस यूनिवर्स पैदा कर दीं और उनकी मार्केट खुल गई। अगर गरीबी देखनी है तो चाहें दिल्ली हो, लखनऊ हो या मुंबई हो, जब शहर में गाड़ी एंटर करती हैं और आप शहर के अंदर चलते हैं, तब आप देखिए कि लोग किस स्थिति में रहते हैं। यहां पर मच्छर गिरते हैं। इसका आपको नई दिल्ली के अंदर, मुंबई या नगर के कुछ हिस्सों में देखकर अहसास होगा। एक तरफ तो हम बात करते हैं कि हमारा देश 2020 में दुनिया की तीसरी ताकत बनेगा, हम से छोटे-छोटे देश ...(समय की घंटी)...

**उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी. जे. कुरियन) :** हो गया।

**श्री राम नारायण साहू :** सर, एक मिनट, बहुत इम्पोर्टेन्ट प्वाइंट है। चीन, जो हमसे बाद में आजाद हुआ है, वे देश जो देर से आजाद हुए हैं, वे देश विकास के रास्ते पर हमसे आगे निकल गए हैं, ये देश विकास के रास्ते पर हमसे आगे कैसे निकले? इसके लिए एक कमेटी बनाई जानी चाहिए, जो इस बात पर गौर करे कि हमसे आगे कैसे निकल गए। नकल हमेशा अच्छी बातों की जाती है।

**उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी. जे. कुरियन) :** साहू जी, तीन मिनट की बजाय पांच मिनट हो गए हैं, खत्म कीजिए।

**श्री राम नारायण साहू :** सर, मैं आपसे केवल एक बात कहना चाहूंगा कि सरकार अपने एतबार पर चलती है और यहां जो हालात पैदा हो रहे हैं-जैसे किसी मकान में बिल हो जाते हैं, वैसे ही सरकार एक बिल बंद कर रही है तो दूसरा बिल खुल रहा है। सन् 1977 में जो स्थिति थी ....(व्यवधान)....

**उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी. जे. कुरियन) :** ओ. के. पांच मिनट हो गए हैं।

**श्री राम नारायण साहू :** सन् 1977 में जो स्थिति थी, उस समय इंदिरा गांधी जी हमारी प्रधानमंत्री थीं। अपने सहयोगियों से पूछा ....(व्यवधान)....

**उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी. जे. कुरियन) :** आपको तीन मिनट बोला था, पांच मिनट हो गए हैं ....(व्यवधान)....

**श्री राम नारायण साहू :** पूछा कि देश में कैसी हालत है, उन्होंने जवाब दिया कि आप ही की जय-जयकार हो रही है। जो बिल निकल रहा है-उस समय भी बहुत बिल हो गए थे, हालात देखते हुए ....(व्यवधान).... उत्तर प्रदेश की ....(व्यवधान).... गवर्नमेंट ने ....(व्यवधान)....

**उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. पी. जे. कुरियन) :** आप बैठिए ....(व्यवधान).... साहू जी, बैठिए ....(व्यवधान).... टी सुब्बारामी रेड्डी ....(व्यवधान).... साहू जी, आप बैठिए ....(व्यवधान).... मैंने बुलाया है ....(व्यवधान)....

**श्री राम नारायण साहू :** बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, our UPA Government is determined to control inflation, to control prices and to achieve GDP growth. These are the three things before the Government. I would like to say that, today, instead of finding faults, first, let us analyse where we are having problems and how to solve them on a short-term on a long-term basis. We must bear in mind the rapid growth of population, increase in purchasing power, and health improvements influence consumption of products. These three are major reasons for the shortage of products. Unfortunately, drought has started appearing. I am praying Lord Balaji of Tirupati to bless good rains all over the country. सबकी प्रॉब्लम आसान करनी है।

Most importantly, the Ministry must now concentrate on construction of cold storages. Several times, we have surplus food products and we would not be able to sell them, and they would perish. We had been hearing about schemes on building cold storage capacities, but nothing is taking shape. Similarly, on warehouses, through we have warehouses, we must multiply the storage capacity all over the country. The Government must provide more funds in the Budget. If necessary, private sector also can be involved in constructing more warehouses and providing storage facilities. Addition of storage is solution number one. Secondly, to face drought-like situations, we must concentrate on agriculture, on irrigation facilities all over the country, not just in one particular State.

Thirdly, we must have advance planning to import items of foodgrains. We must have advance planning for importing sugar, wheat, etc., from surplus countries. So, we must be very cautious, conscious and judicious in planning the whole system. Lastly, I would like to say that the challenge before the Government is how to control prices and how to make things available. People are saying that prices are very high and the quantum of commodities is very low. These are burning problems. Now, the problem of drought will be solved by Lord Balaji and with the capacity of the Hon. Minister, we are going to solve the problem. Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : Sir, I have been carefully listening to the discussion in the House on the rising price of essential commodities. I was quite happy about the entire discussion because it was not restricted only to one subject, that is, rising prices, but some of the important agricultural problems have also been discussed in the House and a lot of constructive suggestions have been made. In fact, about ten days back, I got an opportunity to apprise the House regarding the overall monsoon position, delay in rains, its impact on production and productivity. We had very seriously discussed that subject also. Today we are discussing for the last two days one of the worsening problems, which people of this country are facing and all of us are worried, that is, the prices of the essential commodities. I am grateful that my colleague, the Finance Minister, has participated and he has also given a definite approach of the Government to the House. Let me assure the House that moderating inflation along with the robust or increasing growth are the most important policy planks of the economy. The Government is committed to the farmers and that the farmers from all over India receive fair and remunerative prices and that the terms of trade are maintained in favour of the farmers. Therefore, the Government has been working on these two policy planks, one, to give boost to the agriculture, and, second, to insulate the vulnerable sections of the society especially those who are below poverty line and targeted population under the Antodaya Anna Yojana without adversely impacting the growth momentum necessary for the social and economic development of the country. I do not want to go into the details about the overall approach and progress and what we have done in the area of agriculture. But hon. Members are fully aware that the situation of the agricultural growth, growth rate and availability of foodgrains in the country was not very comfortable. About five years back when Dr. Manmohan Singhji had taken over the reins of this country, conscious efforts have been made to give more weightage to the agriculture and do more investment in agriculture. A number of decisions have been taken. There was shortage of foodgrains.

I recalled that a special meeting was called of the Chief Minister of all the States and for one whole day only one subject was discussed, that is, how to improve production and productivity. The outcome of that meeting was suggestions came from all the Chief Ministers, that substantial amount has to be provided by the Government of India. The State Governments can take help from this

amount. Freedom should be given to the State. Flexibility should be kept. And, in that meeting it was decided to provide Rs. 25,000 crores. And a new scheme has also been introduced, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), and money has been provided to the State with a guideline that whatever Budgetary provision will be made by every State for agriculture, an equivalent amount will be provided by the Government of India, whether it is dairy sector, whether it is poultry sector, whether it is fishery sector, whether it is crop sector, or whether it is agro-processing sector. I am glad to inform this august House that most of the States have taken a lot of interest in this. What we have seen in substantial improvement in the production and productivity of wheat and rice in the last two years. Credit goes to efforts which the State Governments have made, and, to the policies which have been introduced by the Government of India. Another major programme was started, 'Food Security Mission'. In fact, there was a requirement of paying special attention to rice, wheat, pulses and oilseeds. Rs. 5000 crores have been provided and a definite target has been fixed that such and such quantity has to be produced in such and such time. Most of the States have taken advantage of this Scheme; particularly, they have concentrated in the area of paddy and wheat and we have got good results. If we have to give strength to agriculture, we have to see how farmers will get a better price and what are the new areas where there are tremendous opportunities.

One important scheme has been introduced 'the National Horticultural Mission', and, practically, every year, 3000 crores have been provided. In the last four years, our experience is, a substantial new area has come under the horticulture, and, I am confident in another five to six years' time, India will be one of the major horticulture producing countries in the world. Of course, we have to make many other efforts. We have to see how we will be able to set up more agro-processing industries. We have to see how we will be able to improve cold chain and other facilities. We have to see how we will be able to enter in the international market, and, ultimately, price will come to the villages. That particular section has been looked after by the agro-processing Ministry. The House is fully aware about some of the other important decisions that have been taken. One of the major decisions, which this Government has taken, is about loan waiver. In fact, about five years back, the Government has taken a decision to improve the agricultural credit. About five years back, the total agricultural credit which was provided -- crop loan particularly -- was somewhat near to Rs. 82,000 crores. It was decided to see that in three years time there should be a substantial jump. I am happy to inform the House that this year, we have reached somewhat near to Rs. three lakh crores. That type of amount has been provided as a crop loan to the farming community of this country. While we had gone in details about the scheme of loan waiver, our observation was, from Rs. 82,000 crores, we have reached, in the next year to Rs. 1,20,000 crores. In the second year, we have reached to Rs. two lakhs crores. In the third year, we have reached to Rs. two lakh and 60 to 65 lakh crores. But, one observation is, there was a sizeable section among the farming community which is not in a

position to get any benefit from this new effort or approach. The reason is : This section was a defaulter. So, unless and until we remove that anomaly, we will not be able to bring them under this new direction or path which has been opened for them and from where they can get some money either through co-operative institutions or nationalised banks or other banks to invest in agriculture sector. There was a demand that this particular scheme has to be introduced for each and every farmer. But, Sir, the financial burden was quite high. That is why it was not possible.

There was a complaint from one of our colleagues from Punjab. So, ultimately, a decision was been taken only for marginal and small farmers. Why only a decision has been taken for small and marginal farmers? In fact, I would have been happy if the Government is in a position to take a decision which will help each and every farmers of this country. But, there was financial limitation. Ultimately, why we took this decision for the marginal and small farmers? It is because 82 per cent of farmers in this country have below 5 acres or 2 hectares of agricultural land. If this decision is applicable to 82 per cent of farming community of this country, I think, at least, a sizeable section will be out from debt trap. That is the reason why the Government took a decision. Sir, even though there is a provision of an amount of Rs. 71,000 crores for debt weaver, the money so far spent is nearly Rs. 67,000 crores. This is one of the important decisions implemented, practically, within one year. I have seen there is a tremendous change. This section, which was not getting any financial support from either co-operative sector or the banking sector, now will get money and this section is in a position to invest in his filed. I am sure, we will see, ultimately, the result. This is an important decision which this Government has taken.

Sir, one issue is always discussed and it is regarding rate of interest. I recollect, many a time, on many occasions, some of the hon. Members have raised the issue that if anybody wants to buy a Maruti car, he is in a postion to get loan at 8 per cent rate of interest. If farmer wants to take loan and invest it in his farm, he has to pay 12 per cent or 13 per cent interest. During the NDA regime, it was brought down from 12 per cent. During the UPA regime, it was brought down further up to 7 per cent. In this year's Budget, all of us are aware, the Government has given another one per cent incentive to those who pays regularly. So, ultimately, it has reached to somewhat 6 per cent. In fact, I will be happy if this is reduced to 4 per cent. But, one should not forget that we came down from 12 per cent to 6 per cent. And, I am confident, in another three years, we will be able to reach to 4 per cent. And, that is also one of the important decisions this Government has taken.

Sir, Shanta Kumar has said a very vital point that we have neglected irrigation. It is true that a substantial investment was not made in the irrigation sector. In fact, I would say that it is the responsibility of the State Governments. The Government of India never take this responsibility. But, a few years ago, a conscious decision was taken by the Government of India that, at least, to expedite those projects which are at a stage where if we provide some money or financial support, probably, those projects would be completed within one or two years and additional irrigation potential could be added. For this purpose, Sir, a new scheme was introduced and this scheme is known as Accelerated Irrigation Development Programme. I think this year more than Rs. 10,000 was provided and this is a sort of support to the State Governments which are spending substantial money in the irrigation sector.

There is a new scheme, which has been discussed in the House on many occasions, that is, NREGA. Some Members said that because of NREGA, it has become difficult for the farmers to get somebody to work in their fields. There might be some problem in certain areas, but what I am observing is that NREGA will prove to be a very useful scheme for improving production and productivity because thrust in the NREGA is on water conservation, watershed development, minor irrigation tanks, percolation tanks, etc. Ultimately, these types of projects will improve the sub-soil water level and that will, ultimately, be a sort of support to the agriculture. Today, about 40 per cent of our agricultural land is irrigated. It fulfills 60 per cent requirement of the foodgrains in the country. The rest of 60 per cent of our land is dependent on erratic monsoon. Unless and until, substantial investment is made in the area of water conservation, we will not be able to get good results in the area of production and productivity. I am sure, it is NREGA, where more than about Rs. 30,000 crores have been provided, which will be a very useful scheme for the overall development of the agriculture. Why I am saying all these things is to show you that we are not neglecting agriculture. We want to pay more attention to it. We want to provide more money for it and we are going in that direction. That is the reason that in the last few years, the Indian farmers have, successfully, produced maximum quantity of wheat and rice. Though everybody is worried about monsoon, the overall atmosphere of the country is somewhat different, our godowns and warehouses are in a good position. I can tell this House, and through this House to the people of India, that there is a sufficient stock of wheat and rice available in Indian warehouses for the next 13 months...*(Interruptions)*... The Government is very concerned about the rising prices, particularly, food items. Before I go to the dynamics of inflation, there are certain points that I would like to place before the House. For the past two years, there have been certain developments in the farm sector, which are often glossed over. There has been a quantum jump in the MSP. The farmers are getting better prices. They are empowered and are able to make informed decisions on the timings and pricing of their produce. They have also made informed decision on the next crop to be cultivated. They are finally getting their dues. I am not belittling the issue of rising prices, I am only drawing the attention of the House that if the higher prices percolate to the farmers, it could have positive impact on food production and galvanise agriculture into engine of growth of employment. While I shall go into the details of the issue of the food inflation, I would like you to keep this backdrop in mind.

I shall, briefly, mention the overall background of the influential places in our economy as well as anti-inflationary measures the Government has been taking in this regard. The world food situation is, currently, being rapidly redefined by the new divine forces -- income group, climate change, high energy prices, globalisation and urbanisation are transferring food conservation production in market. We cannot just by-pass all these issues, but, practically, the whole world is suffering. Hon. Members are aware that on the inflation front, we have passed through a very difficult time. In fact, we have seen, about two years back what type of a situation was created in Gulf area. Suddenly, the prices of petroleum products, which created a serious situation not only in India, but, practically, all over the world, in most of the developing countries, went up. But we have successfully overcome that situation. We have seen the prices of edible oil. That was just like crude oil. I recollect, about two years back, in the United States of America, there was a trend to divert some of the oilseeds for ethanol, divert corn for ethanol and that had jumped the oilseed prices, edible oil prizes and maize prices all over the world. We have seen that type of situation. But, now, the situation is improving.

In fact, when we discuss the prices of foodgrains, we have to see that one of the important items, which concerns each and every citizen of this country is the prices of rice and wheat. As I said, the hon. Members are fully aware, that in the second suppressed year, we have a record production of foodgrains, totalling 233.88 million tonnes, which is estimated to surpass the previous year. Why? We have also made a record procurement of wheat and rice. In the current year, the procurement has already surpassed the procurement of last year. Sir, 25.23 million tonnes of wheat and 31.91 million tonnes of rice have been procured as on the 24th of last month, and the prices of wheat and rice are reasonably stable. In fact, one hon. Member said that the price of rice in Delhi and in some other places has gone to Rs. 40 per kg. I don't see that. In fact, I got this list of retail prices of the selective essential commodities in Delhi. For instance, one year back, the retail price of rice in Delhi was Rs. 20 kg, and, on the 20 of last month, it was Rs. 21. In fact, there is not too much change. Some of the varieties, which are exceptional varieties like Basmati or some other varieties, which are popular in Andhra and some other States, are, naturally, more expensive. But as far as the average rice variety is concerned, I don't feel, there is too much change in the prices. The price level is quite stable as far as rice is concerned. Similar is the situation about wheat. About one year back, exactly one year back, the per kilogram price of wheat was Rs. 13, and, today, it is the same Rs. 13 in Delhi markets, the retail price. Practically, for the whole year, it remained the same, *i.e.*, Rs. 13. There might be some change in Trivandrum or Chennai. But that was just because of the transport cost, the additional transport cost and beyond that, it was nothing. So, we have successfully managed to maintain, at a particular level, the overall prices of wheat and rice. There are some other items like edible oil. In fact, India is not self-sufficient in some of the agricultural commodities and, particularly, in edible oil and pulses. We practically import about 40 per cent of our requirement of edible oil. We import from Indonesia; we import from Malaysia, and we also import from some other countries. We also need to import to augment the domestic stock to strengthen the food security

and hence India cannot remain immune to global price situation. Yet, we have been able to lessen the impact of the international prices owing to timely policy decisions taken by the Government. Currently, in the international market, prices of edible oil, as on 30th July, are lower than that compared to last year. The price of crude palm oil has declined by 37.76 per cent to US \$ 610 per tonne fob; soyabean oil, by 43 per cent, that is to US \$ 72 per tonne fob; and sunflower oil, by 46.69 per cent to US \$ 725 per tonne fob, and RVG palm oil, by 36 per cent. In the domestic market also, the wholesale prices of edible oil declined in the same period. In the case of soyabean oil, it came down by 31.58 per cent, that is, Rs. 3900 per quintal; sunflower oil, by 33.33 per cent, that is, Rs. 4500 per quintal and RVG palm oil, by 30 per cent. So, the situation in the case of edible oil is not that bad. There are some other items...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE (West Bengal) : Sir, there is a rise of two per cent in just one week in...*(Interruptions)*... How can crude prices...*(Interruptions)*..

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU : Sir, none of these things is...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR (Tripura) : Sir, prices of all commodities have increased. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU : Sir, are we living in two countries? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : No, we are living in the same country...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please, listen...*(Interruptions)*... Please, hear him out. Don't talk in between ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : There are two areas ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : Sir, all prices have gone up. ...*(Interruptions)*... We cannot agree to that...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal) : Sir, he is saying there is no price rise. How is that?...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : Sir, the Minister has been referring to...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please listen ...*(Interruptions)*... What can I do if all of you stand up? ...*(Interruptions)*... Please allow him to complete. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let him complete....*(Interruptions)*...Let him complete. Brindaji, let him complete....*(Interruptions)*... Please, let the Minister complete...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : I am ready to answer ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA : The hon. Minister should tell us the shop number also! ...*(Interruptions)*...Give us the address of the shop and name of the bazaar ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU : Please tell us which shop...*(Interruptions)*..

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, allow me a minute...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : Hon. Mr. Raja, I shall reply...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : All of you may please take your seats...*(Interruptions)*... Please, take your seats. Please resume your seats. Let the Minister complete the speech. Please ...*(Interruptions)*... Brindaji, please, take your seat....*(Interruptions)*... Please, allow him to complete.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : There are two areas ...*(Interruptions)*... I have not yet finished, Mr. Raja. I shall reply to you ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please take your seats ...*(Interruptions)*... I have not yet finished, Mr. Raja. I shall reply to you... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR : There is no control over prices.....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT : There is no price rise at all according to the Minister.. ...*(Interruptions)*... There is no price rise...*(Interruptions)*..

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : We would like to walk out...*(Interruptions)*...

*(At this stage, some hon. Members left the Chamber.)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please, take your seats. I can allow you to seek clarifications..*(Interruptions)*... I would allow you to seek clarifications after the Minister's reply ..*(Interruptions)*... Please..*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU : I would like to know from the Minister ...*(Interruptions)*... 103 rupees per kilo. This is what the ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Let him complete his speech ...*(Interruptions)*.. will allow you to seek clarifications...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Where are all these rates available? Let him ...*(Interruptions)*... He is giving a wrong impression...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU : Sir, we have been patient and we heard the Minister also ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu) : Sir, it is not available ...*(Interruptions)*... We are also walking out.

*(At this stage, some hon. Members left the Chamber.)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Let him complete the speech. Allow him to complete the speech...*(Interruptions)*.... Why don't you listen to him? After the Minister has replied, I shall allow you to seek clarifications...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : Let me reply ..*(Interruptions)*...

6.00 P.M.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : Sir, the issue is very much concerned ...*(Interruptions)*.. Sir, we have been patient. But he must guide us to the shop where these are available...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : For that you have to be calm; you must be seated...*(Interruptions)*... Allow him to guide you...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR (Maharashtra) : We have heard him for half-an-hour. He is adding to the...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : Neither the hon. Finance Minister's nor the Agriculture Minister's reply is anywhere near the truth or the situation. The entire country is disappointed. There is a Government ad which says oil is priced at Rs. 103? And, the hon. Minister is saying that prices are under control ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : I just said about the groundnut, mustard and Vanaspati ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Sir, he is totally misguiding and misleading the House...*(Interruptions)*..

*(At this stage, some hon. Members left the Chamber)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : Please, take your seats.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : There are two areas where the situation is serious. One is sugar and the second is pulses. I accept that the as far as prices of pulses are concerned, particularly in case of *tur dal, urad dal, moong dal* and *masoor dal*, the situation is not very comfortable. In fact, it is affecting each and every family of this country. We are quite worried and we have taken certain steps and we would like to take some more steps, which I will elaborate.

Second issue is about sugar. In fact, two years back, the country's situation about sugar. was altogether different. Domestic sugar production this year is expected to be somewhat near to 150 lakh tonnes. In the year 2007-08, it was 264 lakh tonnes, that is, the final estimate. What was the situation this year? This year, the total production is somewhat near to 150 lakh tonnes, and if we add last year's carry forward stock in the country, that is somewhat near to hundred lakh tonnes. So, the total comes of 250 lakh tonnes. And, the domestic yearly demand is somewhat near to 225-230 lakh tonnes. In fact, the plantation of sugarcane this year and in the last season, as compared to two years back, is definitely less. Reasons are many. One of the reasons is that about two-three years back, there was too much production in our country, and because of too much production, prices dropped like anything. The farmer was getting somewhat near near to Rs. 650 to Rs. 850, or a maximum of Rs. 1000, per tonne price for sugarcane. So, that was not viable at all. In such a situation, sizeable section of the farming community, who were involved in sugarcane production,

decided to shift from sugarcane to another area, particularly in U.P. and Northern India where lot of farmers have shifted from sugarcane to wheat. We have seen that wheat production has substantially improved and one of the reasons is that this Government has taken a conscious decision to provide Rs. 1080 per quintal price for wheat. In fact, when the NDA Government was in power, the price of wheat was Rs. 540 per quintal. Within four years, from Rs. 540, we have gone to Rs. 1080. That is the reason that farmer has shifted to wheat and its production has increased substantially. But, that has affected sugarcane production and sugar production. And, this is happening not only in India; unfortunately, this year, globally, sugar production has been dropped and prices have been rising. They are going up like anything. In fact, I recollect, in this House, about three years back, when there was a discussion on the sugar prices, some hon. Members were insisting that prices should go further down and I made a statement, which is part of the record, that unless and until the prices of sugar reached to somewhat Rs. 22 to Rs. 23 per kilogram, farmer would not go in for sugarcane plantation, and if we were continuously taking actions where prices of sugar would come below Rs. 12, Rs. 13 and Rs. 14 and the prices of sugarcane would come below Rs. 1000, definitely, you would see, in two years' time, prices of sugar would go to Rs. 30 to Rs. 35. That I briefed in this House about three years back. Exactly the same situation we are observing today.

There is one more problem this year that we are facing. As per our latest information, as compared to last year, the area under sugarcane production is little more. But, I am worried about productivity tonnage. One of the reasons for that is insufficient rain. India's major sugar-producing or number one State is UP. We have seen that UP Government has declared drought in about 48 districts or 49 districts. There is insufficient rain in UP. The second major sugar-producing State is Maharashtra. Sufficient water is not there also. Farmers are not showing interest to go to the sugarcane plantation is going on. Fortunately, there is good plantation in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. That is the reason why I say there is more area under sugarcane production as compared to the last year. But still we have to keep a close eye on the situation.

We have taken many decisions just to improve the availability of sugar in this country. This year we have given better prices to sugarcane farmers. Number two, we have allowed duty free import of raw sugar. Why raw sugar? Because we want optimum capacity utilisation of Indian sugar industry and sugar mills also. So, they can now import raw sugar and process it here. We have not put any restriction on that. Let them make it available in the market. We have given this opportunity to all the sugar mills in this country. There are many sugar mills which are now importing raw sugar from Brazil and some other countries. They will be able to process it and make it available in the country.

I was not happy to take one decision, but we have taken that that decision also. We have allowed our PSUs to import fine sugar, initially at one million tonne. That process has also started.

So, we are importing fine sugar; we are importing raw sugar; we are encouraging domestic farmers to grow more sugarcane; we are providing more prices to the farmers as compared to last year. Last year it was at 81 rupees per quintal. This year we have provided 107 rupees 30 paise or 40 paise per quintal. I am sure, farmer will get good prices, and if there is a sufficient rain, he will definitely go for population of sugarcane and the situation may change. But it will not change within one year. It will take time because ultimately sugar is a yearly perennial crop. It will take one year or more than one year to get the final results.

Regarding pulses, as I said pulses are one of the major crops that are affecting us. India is the largest producer as well as the largest consumer of the pulses in the world. India has been a net importer of the pulses due to mismatch between domestic supply and demand of the pulses. Domestic production of the pulses has been around 14 to 14.5 million tonne during the last three years and the demand for the pulses is somewhat near to 17 million tonne. So, our production is 14 to 14.5 million tonnes and our demand is 17 to 18 million tonne. So, there is a gap between demand and supply of about 3.5 to 4 million tonne. The gap between demand and supply is filled by import of different varieties of pulses from different countries, depending upon the availability. In view of the limited source of availability of different varieties of pulses in the international market, domestic prices fluctuate. Last year and this year also, what we have seen in that among pulses, production of two crops have been affected. One is *Tur* and the other is *Urad*. And a little bit of *Moong*. Also *jowar*. Unfortunately, these two crops. *Urad* and *Tur*, had been affected last year not just in India. The availability of *Tur* in international market was also limited. In fact, in the global market, the total availability of pulses was, I think, about 5.5 million tonnes. India alone had procured 2.5 million tonnes. Fifty per cent of the pulses available in the international market have been brought by India. We tried to make it available in India. Still there is a gap and that is the reason why the prices are going up.

But there is one good thing this year. All of us here are worried about monsoon. All of us here are worried about the area under rice cultivation. But, this year, our observation, based on the reports from all the States, is that the area under pulses cultivation has substantially increased, particularly that of *Tur*. If we get good crop, I think, within a few months, the situation will be changed altogether.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan) : Sir, what about prices?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : We have given extremely good MSP and that is the reason why we are suddenly seeing more area under pulses cultivation.

We had taken some other decisions also. Firstly, when availability is a problem, we have taken a decision to remove all restrictions on import of pulses. Practically, there is no tax on it. It is allowed for anybody in the private sector. We instructed all our major PSUs to import. So, they have also imported it. PSUs, particularly STC, PEC, MMTTC and NAFED have been allowed to import pulses. The Government has taken a conscious decision to support them even if they lose some money. For losses up to 15 per cent, the responsibility is taken by the Government of India, and for service charge, of about 1.5 per cent value of the operation.

Under the scheme, in 2008-09, more than nine lakh tonnes of pulses have been imported. Out of that, eight lakh tonnes were disposed of and about one lakh tonne is available as on 29th of the last month.

We have also introduced one scheme. Under the scheme for distribution of pulses, a subsidy of Rs. ten per kg is given for imposed pulses distributed through the Public Distribution System. Initially, 16 States have applied for it. They have shown willingness to accept the scheme. We have imported not directly from Government's account, but we told the PSUs that they should import and supply them to various Governments.

Ultimately, four States came forward. They are : West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh. They have taken the responsibility to make available these pulses through the Public Distribution System in their own States.

Recently, my attention was drawn to a report on a television channel alleging rotting of huge stocks of imported pulses. In fact, one hon. Member has also raised this particular subject here. I have taken report from all the PSUs and found that this was factually not correct. As per the reports given by the PSUs and found that this was factually not correct. As per all the PSUs and found that this was factually not correct. As per the reports given by the PSUs, the unsold stock with them is 1.27 lakh tonnes of pulses of which yellow peas and dun peas account for 1.9 lakh tonnes or 74 per cent of the total unsold stock as on 29th July 2009.

Despite their higher availability at cheaper prices, the State Governments are reluctant to distribute yellow peas through the Public Distribution System. There is no demand for yellow peas. This organisation has imported substantial quantity of the yellow peas. In fact, there is a demand in certain areas for yellow peas. But, States are not accepting yellow peas and that is the reason, particular quantity is still with them. There were reports that large quantity of imported pulses was lying uncleared in Kolkata port. I have the report from the PSU that there was a problem in Customs clearance in Kolkata port for the last two months. This has since been resolved and stocks are being cleared regularly. So, that is not the issue today.

In fact, I am very happy that some of the States are now taking lot of initiatives. The Delhi Government has taken a decision. They have provided subsidy. They have started distribution of pulses through the public distribution system. The Andhra Pradesh Government has taken that decision. Yesterday only, the Civil Supplies Minister from Maharashtra contracted me and said that they have also taken a decision in their Cabinet to provide pulses through public distribution system. Whatever additional price will have to be paid, they will pay from the Government side and they will make available comparatively cheaper pulses through PDS to all sections -- whether it is AAY, BPL or APL. I am sure, each and every State is going to take initiatives like these so that probably, those who are practically affected by high prices will get some relief. It is my appeal to all the State Governments that as the Government of India is discharging its responsibility, similarly, in such a situation, they should also take certain responsibility and try to protect the interests of sections vulnerable of the society.

Sir, there are certain issues which were raised today in the discussion and certain demands were also made. In fact, these Members are not here. There was one suggestion, particularly from an hon. Member from Kerala. Regularly, whenever they get the opportunity, they always try to raise this issue as to why universalization of TDPS is not feasible and why are we not taking it up. In fact, in 1996. The Government of India took the decision to introduce targeted PDS. Instead of providing cheaper foodgrains to every section of the society, let us concentrate on the poorest people, those who come under the BPL and provide them 35 kilograms on a particular rate, and we should also provide for those who are Above Poverty Line at a subsidized rate, but, according to our stock position. So, this scheme has been introduced in June 1997 and this scheme is continuing till today. At present, under TPDS, the level of food subsidy is 78 per cent and 88 per cent on wheat and rice for AAY category. It is 72 per cent and 70 per cent on wheat and rice for AAY category. It is 72 per cent and 70 per cent on wheat and rice for BPL category. It is 60 per cent and 56 per cent on wheat and rice which is supplied to APL category. So, we are already supplying this.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

Sir, one of the important things is, till today, we have not changed the price which was fixed nine years back for PDS. Though we have substantially improved the Minimum Support Price for the farmers, yet we have not changed the issue price for BPL and AAY since last nine years because this Government feels that these vulnerable sections have a right to get foodgrains at a cheaper rate. That is why, that decision has been taken by the Government of India and that subsidy version has gone somewhat from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 55,000 crores which the Government of India has borne. It is possible to take such huge burden for only that section which is weaker, in the true sense. And, that is the reason, why, this targeted PDS has been introduced and implemented for that section. It is not possible to implement the scheme for each and every section of the society. That will be a substantial financial burden and that burden the Government of India is not able to take upon itself as of today.

There is also another complaint that allocation of foodgrains to the States under TDPS has been reduced. That is not correct. Each and every State is getting under BPL and AAY category 35 kgs. per family per month and that is issued everywhere. The expected number of the BPL family, which has been given by the Planning Commission, is 6.52 crores, that is, 30%-35% of the total population. There is no reduction in the allocation for the BPL and AAY categories in the States and the UTs.

There is another complaint that we are not giving anything to the APL category at all. That is also not correct. In fact, the APL allocation during the year 2009-10 is 172 lakh tonnes. Previously it was 112 lakh tonnes. We have enhanced it and we are providing, at least, 10 kgs. per APL family per month. The States which are taking advantage of it are definitely getting this type of allocation which we are regularly sending to them. So, this was also one of the important issues which were raised here. I tried to give a little more information about that.

One of the important issues raised by a few hon. Members was about futures trading and the rise in the prices of essential commodities was the effect of futures trading. In fact, I appreciate the concern of the hon. Members about the possibility of futures trading spawning excessive speculation and thereby causing price rise. The fact shows that this has not been the case in our country. There is no futures trading in urad and tur since January, 2007. It has been suspended. But the prices of these commodities are showing a sharp increase even today, though urad and tur are not traded in futures. Then, why are the prices going up? The prices are going up because there is a mismatch between demand and supply. Future trading is not responsible for it. This is the observation. As against this, there is futures trading in gram. Year on year, change of prices of gram was negative. It was minus 6.8 per cent in 2008-09 and Minus 3.1 per cent as on 18th July, 2009. The future trading in wheat has been restarted recently. The prices of wheat are stable. There was a modest increase of 4.53 per cent in 2008-09 and 1.6 per cent this year. One of the reasons is that we have given better MSP. We have increased the MSP from Rs. 640 to Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,080 per quintal. In fact, the price in futures trading is hardly 1.6 per cent. So, the conclusion which some of the hon. Members have drawn here is that future trading is responsible. I am afraid, it is very difficult to reach that conclusion after going through the explanations that have been given.

In fact, we had appointed an Expert Committee to examine these issues. The Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of the Planning Commission Member, Prof. Abhijit Sen, to examine whether the future market was responsible for the rise in the prices of essential commodities. The Committee in its report acknowledged the fact that the futures market provide a platform for price discovery and price risk management, and the farmers would be benefited from this economic functions of the market. The Committee analysed the daily, weekly and monthly data on the price volatility, that is, spot price. The analysis made by the Expert Committee led it to conclude as follows. "Given these conflicting results from daily, as against weekly and monthly data, no strong conclusion can be drawn on whether introduction of the futures trade is associated with decrease or increase of the spot price volatility. The Committee also analysed annual growth rate in the prices of sensitive commodities in pre-future period and post-futures in some of the sensitive commodities that have higher weight in consumer price indices, it is not possible to make any general claim that inflation accelerated more in commodities with futures trading."

Another issues was raised here about the volume of trade. I would like to mention that high volume of futures trade in commodities indicates the robustness of the market and should not be of much concern if the market is well regulated. It is true that futures trade value has grown from Rs. 21.55 lakh crores to Rs. 52.49 lakh crores, from 2005-06 to 2008-09, but in respect of the agriculture commodities, there has been virtually no increase. Whatever is the gain of the increase that we have seen that is in other areas, that is, gold, silver, other metal, crude oil and natural gas. That is why one should not be worried about all these things.

Last point, which was raised by some of the hon. Members, was about the action taken under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to check the price rise and hoarding of the essential commodities. At present, there are 18 States and UTs which have issued orders imposing stock limits/licensing/stock declaration requirements for the essential commodities for which the Government of India has issued orders permitting the issue of such restrictions. These commodities are pulses, rice, paddy, edible oil, edible oilseeds and sugar. In the case of pulses, 13 States have issued orders imposing stock limits and another four have imposed licensing/stock declaration requirements. The Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, gives powers to the State Governments to detain persons up to six months if it is found that they could act in a manner prejudicial to the Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act. During the calendar year 2008, the States have detained 162 persons. These actions also help to keep in check the prices of essential commodities. My Ministry has been writing to the State Governments, from time to time, on the need for strong enforcement of these statutory provisions. As the august House is aware, these powers under EC Act have already been delegated to State Governments for effective implementation as per local conditions. We are also meeting with the State Government representatives on 8th August to discuss the situation along with various issues arising out of the current status of the monsoon. In this meeting, we would also be emphasising the importance of these regulations and the need for fully utilising the powers that are available with the State Governments today.

So far as the overall price situation is concerned, the situation is serious. But the Government of India is taking various steps. The Government of India is trying to augment the stock. The Government of India is trying to make availability of some of the items like pulses and sugar in open market. The Government of India has, practically, introduced a policy in regard to easy imports from anywhere in the world and also some financial support through the Public Distribution System. My request and appeal to the State Governments is, this is a different situation. Unless the State Governments and the Central Government come together and act collectively to protect the interest of the weaker sections of the society, those who are affected because of these higher prices, it will be difficult to improve the overall situation. I am sure the way the State Governments are taking initiative, probably we will be able to improve the overall situation. We are only worried about the overall situation of the monsoon. I am sure, if the months of August and September go well, we will see a different situation. This is a part of the time of test. I am sure, this Government will waste no efforts to protect the interests of the affected people. With these words, I conclude. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA : Would the hon. Minister consider re-introducing the Commodity Transaction Tax which he had withdrawn during the Budget?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : Sir, as far as introduction of new taxes is concerned, I am not the right person to say about taxation. But we will give a serious thought to this.