

Victims of Malnutrition

†645. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that more than 23 crore persons in the country between the age group of 15 to 49 years are victims of malnutrition due to lack of sufficient intake of food;
- (b) if not, the assessment of Government in this regard;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that due to increase in the prices of foodgrains the number of the said category is increasing constantly;
- (d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) the reasons for constant rise in the prices of foodgrains inspite of their sufficient production in the country during the past years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) In the country, 35.6 per cent of women and 34.2 per cent of men in the age group of 15 to 49 are having a Body Mass Index (BMI) below 18.5, an indicator of nutritional deficiency. Lack of sufficient food intake is one of the reasons of nutritional deficiency. Other reasons are poor access to health services and poor availability of water & sanitation.

(c) Increase in the prices of foodgrains is not only the reason. The other reasons are the traditional caring practices of children under Five, lack of education and awareness, poor access to health service in water and sanitation. Malnourishment of infants and children continues life-long even when the child becomes an adult.

(d) Government has widened the scope of National Rural Health Mission, Supplementary Nutritional Programme through Integrated Child development Scheme. It has also the programmes of Total Sanitation Campaign and Targeted Public Distribution Schemes (TPDS) for the Poor, especially for BPL & APL. In TPDS, APL families get food grains at a subsidized rate and Antyodaya cardholders get 35 kg. foodgrains per family per month.

(e) Rise in the international prices and domestic Minimum Support Prices (MSP) are the major cause of rising prices of the foodgrains in the country. The increase in MSPs of Paddy fixed by Government of India during 2007-08 and 2008-09 were at the rate of 34.2% and 11.76% respectively. And the increase in MSPs of Wheat fixed by Government of India during 2007-08 and 2008-09 were at the rate of 33.3% and 8% respectively.

Norms for BPL identification

646. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is considering to review the norms/parameters for identification of people living Below Poverty Line in the country; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.