

include higher investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure, in R&D, on enhancing productivity, in strengthening post harvest infrastructure, appropriate diversification and also strengthening markets so that small holder farmers improve their earnings.

(c) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Companies deceiving people by giving less quantity of goods at same price

1545. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

SHRI NANDAMURI HARIKRISHNA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is aware of the way the companies are deceiving people by giving less quantity of goods with the same price, for example, 100 gms of toothpaste used to cost Rs. 40 and now they are giving 80 gms of paste for same amount of money;

(b) if so, whether any action has been initiated by his Ministry, through the consumer redressal mechanism, to protect the consumer from such cheating by companies; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The Ministry's attention was earlier drawn to newspaper reports in this regard. The retail sale price declared on a pre packed commodity is decided by the manufacturer. In respect of 'net quantity' declared on a package, commodities, not listed in the Third schedule to the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977, can be packed in any quantity. However commodities listed in the Third schedule to the Rules have to be packed only in recommended standard quantities provided in the said Schedule. However Rules give an option to the manufacturers to pack a commodity listed in the Third schedule in any quantity other than the standard quantity also. When they exercise the option, a declaration "not a standard pack size under the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977", or "non standard size under the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977", have to be made on the package. Tooth paste is not listed in the Third schedule to the Rules and therefore can be packed in any quantity.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Procurement of poor quality of wheat by FCI

1546. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:

SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that Food Corporation of India has procured poor quality wheat during the current season;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the norms laid down for procurement of wheat from markets by Government are violated by FCI; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to bring transparency in the procurement of wheat/grains by FCI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has informed that no poor quality wheat has been procured during current Rabi Marketing Season i.e. 2009-10 by them.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. FCI procures wheat from the farmers at Minimum Support Price (MSP) as per specifications laid down by Government.

Introduction of cash for subsidy scheme

1547. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether some of the State Governments have urged the Union Government to introduce cash for subsidy scheme to weed out corruption in the Public Distribution System;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Public Distribution System is not being implemented properly and effectively by States and thereby genuine beneficiaries are cheated; and
- (d) if so, the details of the steps taken by Government to re-examine the scheme of PDS in various parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) State Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi submitted proposals for approval to direct disbursement of food subsidy in cash to BPL families in lieu of foodgrains under TPDS on a pilot basis in five districts i.e. Lakhimpur Kheri and Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh, Panchkula and Jhajjar in Haryana and Central District in Delhi. Based on those proposals, a draft scheme has been prepared to test feasibility of this alternative mode of transfer of food subsidy to BPL/AAY beneficiaries under TPDS. The draft scheme is under examination. In response to the concept note circulated on the proposed National Food Security Act, Government of Bihar has also now suggested for introduction of cash subsidy under TPDS.

(c) and (d) For independent feed-back on working of TPDS, Government gets it evaluated through independent agencies. The latest reports of NCAER on concurrent evaluation of TPDS in 12 States have shown certain deficiencies such as inclusion and exclusion errors, diversion of BPL/AAY