

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned to meet at 2 o' clock.

The House then adjourned at three minutes past one of the clock.

The House re-assembled at three minutes past two of the clock,

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

**SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION - contd.**

**Situation arising out of continued rise in prices of essential commodities in the country**

**श्री राजनीति प्रसाद (बिहार)** : उपसभापति महोदय, उधर के सब लोग चले गए। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

**श्री राजीव शुक्ला (महाराष्ट्र)** : इससे पता चलता है कि विपक्ष कितना गंभीर है महंगाई के लिए। ...**(व्यवधान)**... सिर्फ चार एम.पी. बैठे हैं भा.ज.पा. के। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

**श्री उपसभापति** : शुक्ल जी, प्लीज बैठिए। आप बोलिए डा. के. मलयसामी। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

**श्री रघुनन्दन शर्मा (मध्य प्रदेश)** : आपको भी कुरियन जी बुलाकर लाए हैं।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please start, Dr. Malaysamy.

DR. K. MALAISAMY (Tamil Nadu): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, for having given me this opportunity to speak on behalf of my party, the AIADMK, on a very important issue,, namely, 'unprecedented and steep rise in food prices', which is mainly affecting the common man. Not only this House, but the entire country is very much concerned about this problem. Unfortunately, there was a big wrangling between the Opposition and the ruling party in the House for three days. Luckily, today, we have actually come to discuss the matter. As far as this issue is concerned, I go by the reply given by the hon. Minister in response to a Parliament Question regarding the price rise. It is the case of the UPA Government as well the authority that the price rise is not disputed at all. As per the statistical data given by the hon. Minister, in his reply, the price of sugar has increased by 64 per cent; pulses have gone up by 66 per cent... Tomatoes have gone up by 115 per cent, onions have increased by 55 per cent, wheat has increased by 13 per cent, likewise it goes on. What I am trying to say is that it is the admitted case of the Government that prices have gone up like anything. The day on which the hon. Minister gave the reply and the present day, we are able to see that some of the prices of commodities have shot up by 200 per cent to 300 per cent. Statistical data are there. Sir, the entire House is quite aware that price of a commodity depends upon its demand and supply. Many a times, the demand and supply and the price do not go together at all. Our simple economics, many a times, fail. When there is a mismatch between demand and supply, inflation occurs. So, this point has to be kept in mind while we discuss this matter. Sir, as far as the price rise is concerned, the effect is manifold. In terms of sufferings and in terms of hardships to the common man who are consumers, it is going up like anything. Sir, it is very much interesting to note that out of 110 crore population in the country, 39 crore population is below poverty line. Then,

38 per cent of the population is suffering for want of purchasing power. Sir, I am submitting to you that 42 per cent of the total resources of a common man are being spent on food items only. They do not have money for children's health care, they do not have money for children's education etc. So, they are not able to meet even their primary requirements. It is, again, very distressing to note that out of the total population of the children, 50 per cent are under-weight, 80 per cent are anaemic and about 56 per cent women are anaemic for want of food and energy. Not only that, Sir, food riots are taking place. Food riots are taking place not only in West Bengal but also in many other States. Not only in India, even in Egypt, Bangladesh and other countries, food protests and instances of violence have been noticed. What I am trying to say, Sir, is that the price rise problem is gigantic and enormous.

In such a situation, what are you going to do? Sir, as far as I am concerned, as a student of Economics, I can say that if we want to solve a problem, the causes of the problem should be identified correctly. Once we have identified the issue correctly, then, we take measures. After the measures have been implemented, some of the problems are mitigated, some of the problems are solved but some of the problems are not solved; the reasons can be explained. Sir, in this situation, I am not blaming anybody but I am telling the truth, Sir, what the policies and programmes are evolved the benefits do not reach the targeted group. I mean, the socially backward community, economically backward community, poverty alleviation should have been done and backward people should be pushed up. What has happened, actually, all these four or five decades since Independence, that the rich have become richer, the poor have become poorer. In other words, there is no balanced growth in the country. Growth and development have been attained, but at whose expense? The growth and development has not reached the targeted group but a different group.

Now, coming to the core of my observations, Sir, if you want to solve a problem, it should be identified correctly. The famous experts and economists have identified the causes which are mainly responsible for price rise. Sir, I am told that change in the consumption pattern is one of the main reasons for increase in the prices. Why has there been a change in the consumption pattern? Due to globalisation, due to some other reasons, it is said that the style of functioning, the style of living of the people have changed, with the result the consumption pattern has also changed. The second point, Sir, is the rise in demand of biofuel. Increase in the demand of bio fuel also contributes to in the price rise. The third point is the decline in productivity. Sir, as a former Director of Agriculture, I can say that there is a big difference between production and productivity. However, I don't want to go into those details at all. Many times, we say that we have increased production. But the point is, whether you have increased the productivity. No. On the other hand, as far as production is concerned, during the earlier period, the growth in our production was higher than the growth in population of our country. But now it is vice versa.

Then, Sir, the most important point about which a lot of people in our country are agitating is regarding the shrinking of the arable land, which means diverting the agricultural land to some other purposes. That is one of the reasons for low production.

Sir, now I come to various remedial measures about which the Government may think of seriously though they are quite aware of it. If a problem is to be solved, one has to attack on two fronts, namely, a short-term and long-term basis *i.e.*, temporary solution and permanent solution. In such a situation when there is an increase in the food prices, when the hike is too much, what kind of short-term and long-term solutions envisaged, have not been clearly spelt out. On the other hand, Sir, they say during the time of crisis, they go for to build up stocks of rice and wheat, etc., for the purpose of supply to PDS, for the purpose of supply to the open market. My friend, Mr. Siva, is there. He may not mind if I say one thing. Sir, I remember to have read in a paper recently that thousands and thousands of tonnes of rice meant for PDS supply has been caught in Tuticorin Port. When it was about to be exported in Tuticorin Port, they were able to seize several thousand tonnes of foodgrains which was meant for PDS. ...*(Interruptions)*... What I am trying to say is, the foodgrains or the food articles meant for distribution through PDS has not been supplied in the PDS. On the other hand, ...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): I agree with you. You should say that more number of cases have been registered in Tamil Nadu; and according to the Essential Commodities Act, Tamil Nadu is acting very well and everybody accepts that.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, this is what remember to have read in a paper. Sir, not one or two tonnes, but thousands and thousands of tonnes of foodgrains are caught in Tuticorin Port in Tamil Nadu. That is why Mr. Siva is interested.

Sir, I forgot to mention about productivity. Sir, when we encourage productivity, initially, the productivity in Tamil Nadu was much less than Punjab and Haryana. Similarly, the productivity in Punjab and Haryana is much less than Irie, Philippines, etc. The overall impression is that the productivity is less in our country.

So, my suggestion is that research and development should be encouraged in such a way that the productivity can be raised, particularly, in the case of dry farming where the yield is very negligible. We have to see how the output in dry farming where there is dearth of rain water etc., could be increased. They should think how they can increase the production and productivity.

Then, another important point on that is to minimise the post-harvest losses. Many times, the agriculturists are neglected. So, something is to be done in this regard. Then, the investment in agriculture is also very less. One of my colleagues has very well mentioned that the Minimum Support Price to the agriculturists or the producer should be ensured. ...*(Time-bell)*... Sir, then I come to the infrastructural facilities that need to be provided in terms of storage, in terms of market outlets, etc.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dr. Malaisamy, you have already taken more than the allotted time. I have allowed it. Now, you have to conclude.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, I will take only two minutes more. I am only mentioning only points. Sir, I am cutting short my debate and just making points only. The time allotted to me is very less and the Chair is particular that I speak less; so I shall go by it!

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have exhausted all your time, and exceeded it also.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: The next point, Sir, is about increase of credit facilities to agriculturists. One very important aspect here is arrest of diversion of agricultural land for some other purposes. Then, Sir, talking of food inflation, there is a mismatch between demand and supply. Food inflation has gone up to 20 per cent, I am not able to suggest any solution but the great experts and economists should think about what to do about that.

Sir, I do not say that the Government is totally silent, indifferent or negligent steps are being taken by the Government. They have identified the problem and are taking measures. I am very much interested in knowing whether the measures taken are adequate and effective. This is my usual point. Many a time you take measures, you call your team or constitute committees and appoint people. You say that you have taken cognizance of the problem. Is the cognizance you have taken adequate enough to see that the problem has been rightly identified and a right solution has been found. Secondly, in our system of democracy, people's representatives are the political executive; they take decisions. Once a decision is taken, they pass it on to the bureaucrats who then take it to the public. So, the public, the bureaucrats and the political executive must work as a team. Political executives like you take a decision. What do bureaucrats do? Were you able to ensure that whatever has been decided has been done effectively and whatever you wanted has been achieved? I feel that there is a failure of the system and human failure or failure of both. If you are able to avert these failures, you could avert that problem.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think that is your conclusion.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: In the Chief Ministers' meeting, the hon. Prime Minister had said to the forum that the worst is over. I would like to know whether the best can be awaited.

**श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी (बिहार) :** उपसभापति महोदय, आपने मुझे बोलने का समय दिया, इसके लिए मैं आपका बहुत आभारी हूँ। इस सदन में महंगाई पर हम आठ बार चर्चा कर चुके हैं और नवीं बार चर्चा का कोई नतीजा नहीं निकला, दामों में बेतहाशा इजाफा होता रहा और हमको लगता है कि इस बार भी हम जो बहस कर रहे हैं, उसका क्या नतीजा निकलेगा, यह कहना कठिन है क्योंकि लगता है कि महंगाई के सामने सरकार ने बिल्कुल घुटने टेक दिए हैं, आत्मसमर्पण कर दिया है। हल्दी-चूना बन गई है यह सरकार, यह हालत है। जिस तेजी से चीजों के दाम बढ़ रहे हैं, इसके पीछे क्या कारण है, कौन सा वर्ग है, यह बात समझ में नहीं आती। हमारे साथी, नेता विरोधी दल अरुण जेटली जी जब बोल रहे थे, तब उन्होंने दालों की कीमतों के बारे में कहा कि दालों की कीमत लगभग सेंचुरी तक पहुंच गई है। वे क्रिकेट के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं, इसलिए उन्होंने क्रिकेट के साथ उनकी तुलना की। हमारे यहां एक कहावत है कि "दाल रोटी खाओ, प्रभु के गुण गाओ।" अब दाल खाए बगैर प्रभु का गुण गाने के लिए इस देश के लोग बाध्य हैं। क्या हालत है इन दालों की? 1951 में इस देश में प्रति व्यक्ति 60.7 ग्राम दाल उपलब्ध थी। 1959 में यह उपलब्धता 74 ग्राम से ऊपर हो गई और आज 2007 में यह सिर्फ 35.5 ग्राम प्रति व्यक्ति उपलब्ध है। आप जानते हैं कि इस देश का बहुमत शाकाहारी है और शाकाहारियों के लिए प्रोटीन का ज़रिया दाल है। महोदय, अभी कुपोषण की बात हुई और कई सदस्यों ने जिक्र किया कि उसका बहुत बड़ा कारण है कि दाल की उपलब्धता नहीं है। 1994-95 में जो दाल 34 रुपए किलो बिक रही थी, उसके दाम आज सेंचुरी में पहुंच गए हैं और अरहर की दाल 90 रुपए, 95 रुपए किलो बिकी, यह तो हमारी देश की हालत है।

चीनी के दाम के बारे में अरुण जी बता रहे थे कि कितने परसेंट बढ़ गए। सबसे दुखद बात है, जले पर नमक छिड़कने वाली बात है, जब यह कहा गया कि साहब, चीनी मत खाइए, चीनी न खाकर लोग मर नहीं गए हैं। यह कैसी बेशर्मी है? जिन लोगों को दाम पर नियंत्रण रखना है, वे इस तरह से जवाब दे रहे हैं कि आप मत खाइए। हमें याद आया, अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति बुश साहब ने कहा था कि जो अन्न की कीमत बढ़ रही है, उसके पीछे कारण यह है कि चीन और हिन्दुस्तान के लोग ज्यादा भोजन कर रहे हैं, इसलिए चीजों के दाम बढ़ रहे हैं। एक हम लोगों का देश है। हमारे प्रधान मंत्री जी जब अमेरिका गए तो उन्होंने बुश साहब को कहा कि आप हमारे देश में बहुत लोकप्रिय हैं। इसलिए लोकप्रिय हैं कि वे कह रहे हैं कि हम लोग ज्यादा खा रहे हैं इसलिए दुनिया में खाद्यान्नों की कीमत बढ़ रही है। यह हम लोगों की हालत है। महोदय, चीनी का दाम इतना कैसे बढ़ा, यह बात समझ में नहीं आती है। यह बात सही है कि गन्ने का उत्पादन 2008-09 में कम हुआ। 2007-08 में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय मंडी में चीनी का दाम बहुत कम था, चीनी मिलों ने गन्ना नहीं खरीदा। किसानों का गन्ना खेत में सूख गया, लोगों को जलाना पड़ा और अगले साल लोगों ने गन्ने की पैदावार कम की इसलिए चीनी मिलें कह रही हैं कि गन्ने का उत्पादन कम हुआ, इसलिए चीनी का उत्पादन कम होगा, चीनी का दाम ऊपर जाएगा। लेकिन मैं आपको स्मरण कराना चाहता हूँ - यहाँ पर शरद पवार जी बैठे हैं - सरकार ने दावा किया था कि हमारे पास 110 लाख टन चीनी का भंडार है, इसलिए चीनी का कितना भी कम उत्पादन होगा, चीनी के दामों में वृद्धि नहीं होगी। इसके बावजूद चीनी के दामों में वृद्धि कैसे हुई, यह बात हमारी समझ में नहीं आती है। महोदय, महाराष्ट्र के एक कांग्रेसी नेता है - कन्हैया लाल डिडवानी साहब - वे फूड कॉरपोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया के डायरेक्टर थे। उन्होंने प्रधान मंत्री को चिट्ठी लिखी, कृषि मंत्री को चिट्ठी लिखी कि चीनी में सट्टा बाजार हो रहा है, वायदा बाजार हो रहा है। चीनी का दाम नकली ढंग से मुनाफाखोर और जमाखोर लोग बढ़ा रहे हैं, इस पर आप अंकुश लगाइए। मैं खुद नहीं कहना चाहता हूँ, लेकिन डिडवानी साहब ने देश के कृषि मंत्री पर आरोप लगाया कि ये गरीबों के आदमी नहीं हैं, ये अमीरों के आदमी हैं और इनकी वजह से चीनी का दाम बढ़ रहा है, यह उनका कहना है। यह हालत इस देश की है। उन्होंने वायदा बाजार के बारे में कहा। हमारी समझ में वायदा बाजार नहीं आता कि वायदा बाजार क्या है। लेकिन हमने जब वायदा बाजार के बारे में जानकारी इकट्ठी की तो हमें बहुत आश्चर्य हुआ। यह आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण जो आज हम लोगों को दिया गया है, इस आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण में अगर आप वायदा बाजार का वॉल्यूम देखें तो आश्चर्य होता है। 2005 में जो वायदा बाजार 15-16 लाख करोड़ का था, वह 2007 में 36,54,487 करोड़ रुपए का हो गया है। यह आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण कह रहा है कि वही वायदा बाजार 2008 में 50,33,884 करोड़ का हो गया और 2009 में 70,90,456 करोड़ रुपए का हो गया। यह वायदा बाजार अद्भुत है और अद्भुत ढंग से इसकी वृद्धि हो रही है। मैंने कहीं पढ़ा कि हिसाब लगाकर बताया गया कि इस वायदा बाजार में जो ट्रांजेक्शन है उस पर अगर आप 1 परसेंट का टैक्स लगाइए तो जो आपका फिस्कल डेफिसिट है, राजकोषीय घाटा है, वह घाटा पूरा हो जाता है। दूसरे ढंग से अगर आप हिसाब लगाकर देखें कि अगर इसमें 2 परसेंट मुनाफा है तो इस वायदा बाजार के कारोबार से लगभग 1 लाख करोड़ रुपए का मुनाफा है। वायदा बाजार की यह हालत है और ये लोग बहुत ताकतवर हैं। पिछले बजट में वित्त मंत्री जी ने वायदा बाजार के ट्रांजेक्शन पर टैक्स लगाया था। कितना टैक्स लगाया था - 0.013 परसेंट। 0.1 परसेंट भी नहीं, आधा परसेंट भी नहीं, केवल 0.013 परसेंट टैक्स लगाया। आप जानते हैं कि ये कितने ताकतवर लोग हैं। एक आदमी ने भी टैक्स नहीं दिया और सरकार को उसे वापस लेना पड़ा - वायदा बाजार इतना ताकतवर है। यह सही बात है कि 2003-04 में जब एनडीए की सरकार थी, उस समय वायदा बाजार को इजाजत दी गई, 103 जिसों में वायदा बाजार को इजाजत दी गई। उस समय तर्क था कि वायदा बाजार कीमतों में स्थिरता लाएगा, दाम में बढ़ोत्तरी नहीं होगी।

किसानों को फायदा मिलेगा और उनके उत्पादन का उचित मूल्य उनको मिलेगा और उपभोक्ताओं को भी सही भाव में उनके उपभोग की सामग्री मिलेगी, इस तर्क के आधार पर वायदा बाजार को इजाजत मिली थी। अब क्या हालत है? उस इजाजत से पहले भी दामों में वृद्धि होती थी। हमको याद है कि इंदिरा जी जब प्रधान मंत्री थीं तो

उस समय तेलों की कीमतें बढ़ गई थीं। हम समाजवादी लोग, लोहियावादी लोग नारे लगाते थे कि यह देखो इंदिरा के खेल, खा गई राशन पी गई तेल। बीच में प्याज का दाम बढ़ा था। प्याज के दाम पर सरकार चली गई थी। उस समय एकाध जिस का दाम बढ़ता था। लेकिन जब से वायदा बाजार आया है, तब से एक-एक आइटम में चीजों के दामों में आग लगी हुई है और कोई देखने वाला नहीं है। वायदा बाजार पर हाथ डालने की हिम्मत इस सरकार में नहीं है। यह हालत हो गई है कि चीजों का उत्पादन कुछ और है और हमने देखा है कि हालत क्या है, वायदा बाजार किस तरह से काम कर रहा है। उसका एक नमूना आप देख लीजिए। 2005-2006 में ग्वार की आपूर्ति सिर्फ 6 लाख टन थी। 6 लाख टन ग्वार पैदा हुआ और इसमें कितने का कारोबार हुआ? मायने 1692 लाख टन का वायदा बाजार में कारोबार हुआ। यही हाल चने में रहा। आप देख लीजिए कि पैदावार कितनी है? बाजार में चने की आपूर्ति 6 लाख टन हुई और वायदा बाजार में कारोबार 742.55 लाख टन का हुआ। चीजों का पता नहीं है, सिर्फ मार्जिन पर व्यापार हो रहा है, जो हमारा उत्पादन है उसके 6 गुने, 8 गुने, 10 गुने पर वायदा कारोबार हो रहा है। आप जाइए और पूछिए कि जो छोटे-छोटे दुकानदार हैं, जिनकी किराना की दुकानें हैं, उनसे पूछिए कि भैया, क्यों दाम बढ़ रहा है? अभी तुम दाल इस भाव पर दे रहे थे और आज दस रुपए, पंद्रह रुपए कैसे बढ़ गया? वह कहता है कि वायदा बाजार है, वायदा बाजार के चलते दाम बढ़ रहा है। आप मुर्गी पोसने वाले, अंडा बेचने वाले कारोबारियों से पूछिए कि क्यों दाम बढ़ रहा है? वे लोग कहते हैं कि वायदा बाजार का कमाल है। लेकिन यह सरकार कह रही है, जब हल्ला हुआ तो इन्होंने एक कमेटी बना दी। उस कमेटी ने, मेरा आरोप है कि जाल फरेब के आधार पर उन्होंने ऐसे-ऐसे जिसों के बारे में जांच-पड़ताल की जिनका होलसेल प्राइस इंडेक्स में वजन कम है, वैसे-वैसे जिसों का दाम लेकर के उन्होंने साबित कर दिया कि नहीं साहब, वायदा बाजार से दामों में बढ़ोत्तरी नहीं होती है। इस प्रकार खुलेआम वायदा बाजार इसी तरह से चल रहा है, इसी तरह से यह देश चल रहा है। अभी कई माननीय सदस्यों ने भाषण किया और बहुत ईमानदारी के साथ उन्होंने कहा कि देश में गरीबों की जो हालत है उनको राहत पहुंचाने के लिए पी.डी.एस. में राशन मुहैया कराया जाए, ताकि वे जिंदा रह सकें, यह सरकार की नीति है। जो खाने-पीने की वस्तुएं हैं, उनके उत्पादन को बढ़ाने की सरकार की जो कोई नीति है, वह कहीं से नहीं दिखाई देती है। यहां कृषि मंत्री जी बैठे हुए हैं। 2004-2005 को शरद पवार जी ने 15 हजार करोड़ रुपए के राष्ट्रीय बागवानी मिशन की घोषणा करते हुए सदन में कहा था कि देश में गेहूं, चावल का उत्पादन कम करो। यह कहा जा रहा है कि गेहूं, चावल का उत्पादन कम कीजिए और ऐसी चीजों का उत्पादन कीजिए जिनको आप एक्सपोर्ट कर सकें, जिनका आप निर्यात कर सकें। आप फूल पैदा कीजिए, आप झींगा मछली पैदा कीजिए, आप सोयाबीन का पैदा कीजिए, ताकि यूरोप और अमेरिका के मांस खाने वाले जानवरों को उसकी खलनी मिल सके। यह जो कहा जा रहा है, यह जो उपदेश दिया जा रहा है और धीरे-धीरे क्या हालत हो रही है? इन लोगों ने एक एडवाइजरी नियुक्त किया था। वह एडवाइजर McKinsey कम्पनी थी। उस कम्पनी ने इनका जो फूड कारपोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया है, उसके बारे में जांच करके यह बताया कि यह जो आप अनाज का भंडार रखते हैं, इसमें काफी खर्चा है, इस खर्च को आप धीरे-धीरे घटाइए। फूड कारपोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया ने अपने यहां नई बहाली करना छोड़ दिया है। यहां से आठ हजार, दस हजार लोगों को निकालने की योजना है। यह क्यों हो रहा है, मैं आपको बतलाना चाहता हूँ कि 1991 में विश्व बैंक ने भारत संबंधी एक दस्तावेज जारी किया। उस दस्तावेज में विश्व बैंक ने क्या कहा कि गेहूं और चावल के सुरक्षित कार्यशील भंडारों के ऊंचे भंडारों के ऊंचे स्तर.....

1991 में क्या ऊंचा स्तर था? 190 लाख टन का हम लोगों ने अपने भंडार में अनाज रखा था। क्या कहा? यह कहा कि ये जो भंडार हैं, ये खर्चीले और गैर जरूरी दोनों हैं। भारतीय खाद्य निगम की नई भूमिका तथा बाजार के हस्तक्षेप के नए उद्देश्यों को देखते हुए ऐसा विशेषकर माना जा सकता है।...(व्यवधान)...

**श्री उपसभापति :** तिवारी जी।

**श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी :** कम उत्पादन के वर्षों में विश्व बाजार में प्रवेश करके, आपूर्ति बढ़ाकर तथा खरीद के लिए विदेशी मुद्रा की व्यवस्था रखकर भारत कम सुरक्षित भंडारों से भी काम चला सकता है, विश्व बैंक ने हमको यह निर्देश दिया था और उसी निर्देश पर यह काम हो रहा है, लेकिन क्या हालत है? जब हिंदुस्तान को, हमारे मुल्क को गेहूँ की जरूरत होती है तो विश्व बाजार में दाम बढ़ जाता है। हमारे कृषि मंत्री जी ने एक साल में तीन-तीन दाम देकर गेहूँ का आयात किया था, लेकिन जब हमें विश्व बाजार में पच्चीस लाख, पचास लाख बेचना होता है, तो बाजार में क्या होता है? तब विश्व बाजार में दाम घट जाता है। यह साबित करता है कि सरकार यह नहीं चाहती है कि हम खाद्यान्नों के मामले में स्वावलंबी हों। सरकार यह नहीं चाहती कि इस देश का गरीब आवागम ...**(व्यवधान)**... जिसकी तादाद तीन चौथाई है, सही से खा-पी सके। उपसभापति महोदय, मुझे यह लगता है कि हम लोग अपना धर्म निभा रहे हैं, देश के जो कमजोर लोग हैं, उनकी आवाज को यहां उठा रहे हैं, लेकिन यह सरकार अपना राजधर्म पालन करने में बिल्कुल असमर्थ है। यह गरीबों के हित में नहीं, बल्कि पूंजीपतियों, अमीरों, वादा बाजार कारोबारियों के हित में काम करने वाली सरकार है। अगर इस सरकार को शर्म हो, तो दाम के सवाल पर ही इस्तीफा दे देना चाहिए, इनको बैठे रहने का कोई अधिकार नहीं है।

**श्री गोविंदराव आदिक (महाराष्ट्र) :** उपसभापति महोदय, धन्यवाद। मैं शुरू में यह कहना चाहूंगा कि हम लोग सुबह से यहां चर्चा सुन रहे हैं ...**(व्यवधान)**... जो कहा था, मैं आपके सामने एक लाइन यहां उद्धृत करूंगा ...**(व्यवधान)**... उपसभापति महोदय, यहां माइक में कुछ समस्या है।

**श्री भगत सिंह कोश्यारी (उत्तराखण्ड) :** महंगाई का असर हो गया है।

**श्री गोविंदराव आदिक :** यह और बात है कि महंगाई हमारे बस में नहीं है, मगर दीया जलाना तो हमारे अख्तियार में है। महोदय, मैं कहता हूँ कि हम इस बात को मानते हैं कि जो महंगाई बढ़ी है, उसके कारण देश में सारी दिक्कतें पैदा हुई हैं। हम नहीं कहते हैं कि नहीं है, यह हैं। बढ़ती हुई कीमतें सरकार के सामने जरूर एक चुनौती रखती हैं और सरकार इसके लिए बहुत प्रयत्नशील भी है। सरकार कोशिश कर रही है, लेकिन सवाल इतना पैदा होता है कि क्या ऐसी परिस्थिति में हमारी सरकार चुपचाप बैठी हुई है? आप सभी लोग जानते हैं कि यह चर्चा यहां पहली बार नहीं हो रही है, इसके पहले भी हमने यह चर्चा यहां की थी। इसके कारण भी आप जानते हैं कि महंगाई किस कारण बढ़ी है। हम जब तक इसका मूल नहीं ढूंढेंगे, रूट में नहीं जाएंगे और इसके कारण नहीं समझेंगे तो मुझे लगता है कि इसके लिए जो उपाय और योजना हम लोगों को बनानी होगी, उसके बारे में सरकार हो या विपक्ष हो, ठीक तरह से कोई सुझाव भी नहीं दे पाएंगे। महोदय, सारी दुनिया जानती है कि पिछले कई सालों में देश में मानसून की क्या स्थिति रही है। ये सारी चीजें मानसून पर निर्भर होती हैं। अगर मानसून ठीक नहीं रहा, तो अत्यावश्यक वस्तुओं का उत्पादन घटता है। हम दो साल से देख रहे हैं और पिछले साल तो हमने यह देखा था कि देश में जो average rainfall होती है, उससे 23 प्रतिशत कम rainfall हुई। 1972 से लेकर अब तक अगर कभी सबसे कम बारिश हुई है, तो वह पिछले साल हुई है। इस साल भी इसमें कोई ज्यादा फर्क नहीं हुआ है। जब बारिश कम होती है, तो गेहूँ हो, चावल हो या जो भी खाद्यान्न हो, उसकी उपज कम होती है और देश के सामने समस्या खड़ी होती है। मैं आंकड़ों के फंदे में नहीं पड़ता हूँ। इसके बारे में शायद कृषि मंत्री जी या बाकी लोग सदन के सामने

आंकड़े पेश करेंगे, लेकिन एक बात सही है कि मानसून ठीक नहीं रहा और हमारा उत्पादन जितना होना चाहिए था, उतना नहीं हुआ। फिर भी हमारे सामने जो सारी प्रॉब्लम्स आ गईं, उनमें प्रकृति ने हमारा साथ दिया। पूरे देश भर में यह स्थिति है, यह सबके सामने हैं, सब इसे मानेंगे कि 13 राज्यों में करीब 316 जिलों में अकाल की स्थिति पैदा हुई, जिससे आप देख रहे हैं कि यह सब shortage पैदा हुई, लेकिन हमारा भाग्य अच्छा था कि पंजाब, हरियाणा, उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार जैसे राज्यों में, जहां गेहूं और चावल का उत्पादन बड़े पैमाने पर होता है, वहां इनका उत्पादन अच्छा रहा। यह इसलिए अच्छा रहा, क्योंकि किसानों ने भी गेहूं और चावल की उपज ज्यादा की, क्योंकि केन्द्र सरकार ने गेहूं और चावल के लिए जो MSP declare की थी, जो rate उसने तय किया था, उसका फायदा किसानों ने लिया है। इससे किसान खुश हैं। इसलिए हम देखते हैं कि देश भर में हमारे खाद्यान्न के भण्डार आज भी भरे हुए नजर आ रहे हैं। महोदय, मैं पिछले हफ्ते हरियाणा गया था। किसानों के एक सम्मेलन में किसान लोग हमें बता रहे थे कि जिन्दगी में पहली बार उनको गेहूं और धान का इतना अच्छा मूल्य मिला और इसलिए वे और उपज बढ़ाना चाहते हैं। मुझे लगता है कि अगर उनकी यही प्रवृत्ति रहेगी, तो देश में इन चीजों की कोई कमी नहीं होगी और गरीब जनता को हमें जो खाद्यान्न उपलब्ध करा कर देना है, उसमें कमी कमी नहीं आएगी।

महोदय, हम यह देख रहे हैं कि बाकी चीजों में महंगाई बढ़ गई है। इसके बहुत सारे कारण हैं, जिनकी तफसील में मैं नहीं जाना चाहूंगा, लेकिन हमारे विपक्ष के भाइयों से हमारा इतना कहना रहेगा कि मेहरबानी करके इस स्थिति को एक राष्ट्रीय आपत्ति के रूप में समझिए। यह किसी सरकार की गलती है, अगर आप ऐसा मानेंगे, तो मुझे लगता है कि यह गलत होगा। ठीक है, सरकार चलाते समय कुछ गलतियां हो भी सकती है, हम यह नहीं कहते कि कभी किसी की कोई गलती नहीं होती है, लेकिन जिस ढंग से यह संकट हमारे सामने आया है, यह पूरे देश के सामने एक बड़ा संकट बन कर उभरा है। इसमें सबको साथ देने की आवश्यकता है। मैं हमारे विपक्ष के मित्रों से भी यह कहूंगा कि हमारी सरकार जो प्रयास कर रही है, वह आप देखिए। अगर उसमें कुछ कमी है या उसमें आपको कुछ सुझाव देना है, तो दीजिए, सरकार उनको जरूर स्वीकार करेगी। लेकिन मैं सुबह से यहां देख रहा हूँ कि अच्छी तरह से कोई सुझाव नहीं आया है। किसी ने कोई विशेष सुझाव दिया है, यह बात नहीं है। यहां हम सिर्फ यह देख रहे हैं कि कुछ निन्दा हो रही है और कुछ नहीं।

आपके माध्यम से मैं एक-दो बातों का स्पष्टीकरण करना चाहूंगा। हमारी बहन वृंदा जी ने महाराष्ट्र के बारे में एक सवाल उठाया था। उनका यह कहना है कि जो अनाज हम महाराष्ट्र में लोगों को देते हैं, उसे डायवर्ट करके हम उसका इस्तेमाल मध्यान्ह निर्मितिके लिए कर रहे हैं। मैं वृंदा जी से यह कहना चाहूंगा कि जो इन्फॉर्मेशन आपको मिली है, वह ठीक नहीं है। एक बार आप फिर उसकी जांच करवा लीजिए, क्योंकि महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने जो निर्णय लिया है, वह गेहूं या चावल के लिए नहीं है, बल्कि ज्यादा बारिश होने के कारण पैदा होने वाली काली ज्वार के बारे में है। काली ज्वार विशेषकर हमारे विदर्भ, मराठवाड़ा एरिया में होती है। वहां पर किसानों के सामने काली ज्वार का एक बहुत बड़ा संकट सामने आया था, जिससे किसानों को राहत देने के लिए महाराष्ट्र सरकार को यह फैसला करना पड़ा। काली ज्वार कोई खाता नहीं है। यह हाईब्रीड, होता है, जिसे किसान पैदा तो करता है, लेकिन उसे कोई खाता नहीं है। उसका कंजम्शन नहीं हो पाता है, इसलिए उसे फेंक देना पड़ता है। किसानों को नुकसान नहीं हो इसलिए...(व्यवधान)...



**डा. (श्रीमती) नजमा ए. हेपतुल्ला** (राजस्थान) : फिर क्यों पैदा करते हैं?

**श्री गोविंदराव आदिक** : पैदा किसान करते हैं, हम पैदा नहीं करते।

मैडम, मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि महाराष्ट्र में दुग्ध का उत्पादन बड़े पैमाने पर होता है। देश भर में दूध का सबसे ज्यादा उत्पादन हमारे स्टेट में ही होता है। वहाँ डेयरी उद्योग में जानवरों के लिए जो चारा लगता है, उनके लिए जो खाद्यान्न लगता है, वह उसी काली ज्वार से बनता है...(व्यवधान)...

**श्री रघुनन्दन शर्मा** (मध्य प्रदेश) : आप जो बता रहे हैं...(व्यवधान)...

**श्री उपसभापति** : वह बता रहे हैं न, उनको बोलने दीजिए...(व्यवधान)...

**श्री गोविंदराव आदिक** : जानवरों के लिए हमारे किसान उसी हाईब्रीड का इस्तेमाल करते हैं। हाईब्रीड के फॉडर का उपयोग जानवरों के खाद्यान्न के लिए किया जाता है। खाने के लिए वह लोगों को अच्छा नहीं लगता है, इसलिए लोग इस ज्वार या हाईब्रीड खाते नहीं हैं। इस तरह के खाद्यान्न का उपयोग करके अगर कुछ पैसा बनाया जा सकता है और किसानों को कुछ फायदा मिल सकता है, उस काम को जरूर करना चाहिए और इसीलिए महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने यह फैसला लिया है। इसके कारण राशन की दुकान पर जो अनाज मिलता है, उसमें कुछ कमी नहीं हुई है, कोई नुकसान नहीं हुआ है। मैं आपसे इतना ही कहूंगा कि मेहरबानी करके आप यह गलतफहमी मत रखिए। इसके बारे में सरकार के प्रयास जारी हैं और वह सतर्क है। आपको हम यह बताना चाहेंगे कि पिछले छः महीने में जो स्थिति वहाँ थी, वह आज नहीं रही है। अगर आपको चाहिए तो मेरे पास इसके आंकड़े भी हैं। आज सुबह ही मैंने अपने गांव की एक दुकान से ये आंकड़े लिए हैं कि आज की तारीख से वहाँ पर वस्तुओं के दाम क्या-क्या हैं। अभी किसी ने कहा कि मूल्यों में बढ़ोत्तरी हुई है, लेकिन मैं आपको बड़ी नम्रतापूर्वक बताना चाहूंगा कि पिछले छः महीनों से खाने की वस्तुओं के मूल्यों में कोई बढ़ोत्तरी नहीं हुई है, बल्कि रेट कम ही हुए हैं। एडिबल ऑयल का रेट कम हुआ है, जो पहले 56 रुपए प्रति लीटर था, लेकिन अब वह 52 रुपए पर आ गया है। चना दाल 35 रुपए प्रति किलो पर बिकती थी, उसका मूल्य 30 रुपए हो गया है। मसूर दाल का मूल्य 61 रुपए से 50 रुपए किलो हो गया है। बेसन, धनिया पाउडर, बटाटा, मिर्च एवं अन्य वैजिटेबल्स के रेट भी घटे हैं...(व्यवधान).... अब आप कौन सी दुनिया में रहते हैं, मुझे यह तो मालूम नहीं है, लेकिन यह हमारे गांव के मूल्य हैं।

**श्री तारिक अनवर** (महाराष्ट्र) : मैडम, क्या आप कभी बाजार में सौदा खरीदने जाती हैं? शायद कभी नहीं जाती हैं।

**डा. (श्रीमती) नजमा ए. हेपतुल्ला** : बिल्कुल जाती हूँ, आप पर्ची देख लीजिए।

**श्री उपसभापति**: आप समाप्त कीजिए।

**श्री गोविंदराव आदिक** : मेरा कहना इतना ही है कि हमारी सरकार ने जो एक्शन लिए हैं, उसका ही यह नतीजा है। हमें पूरा विश्वास है कि इस महंगाई के संकट को दूर करने के लिए यह सरकार पूरी-पूरी कोशिश कर रही है, लेकिन आप लोगों का सहयोग भी उनको चाहिए। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, price rise is the single most burning issue in the country today. The prices of all the food items and essential commodities have gone up many folds. I don't need to give statistical figures on prices of these items. That is the reason why we demanded a

substantive discussion. I appeal to all the political parties, let us take the strong feeling of the people into serious consideration. There is anger among the people; there is also a sense of cynicism among the people. What our people think is, the more you discuss, the more prices go up. That is the cynicism that is catching up. This tells very bad about Parliament and Members of Parliament. We should discuss this issue with all seriousness. "Spectre of price rise looms large; price spiral squeezes the Budget; food inflation up again; retail loot; *mandi* prices a fraction of what you pay; universal PDS only way to beat hunger, tackle price spiral; wholesale price index inflation surges to 8.56 per cent in January; ballooning inflation; pricey price line, etc." — are the headlines of the national dailies. And, I hope this should make the Government more sensitive. There are people who think Government is clueless. There are people who think Government is groping in the dark to find ways and means. But, I don't agree with that. The Government knows, those who are in power know, what is happening in the country. But, the point is, they do not want to act. They could have taken serious steps to control inflation and prices. They did not want to act. Why? The Government, the UPA-II, is totally committed to neo-liberal paradigm of development. This Government persists with its neo-liberal policy of free market economy. This Government persists with the policy of no or less State intervention. This Government persists with the policy of liberal concessions to big business houses, multinational corporations, etc. on whom it depends for increasing investments for accelerating the rate of growth. Earlier, those, who are in power, the UPA-II Government, had been blaming the global factors. It said that inflation is high, so prices will go high. They were saying that prices of fuel, prices of food items, etc. have gone up in international market. They said that inflation had gone up at global level. So, India had to suffer. But, inflation rate came down from double digit to single digit, even to the level of zero. But, prices did not come down. What is the economic logic? What is the explanation from the Government? We didn't get any. Then, the Government started blaming it on monsoon, less rains, etc. Yes, there were less rains; there was drought. But, there were floods also; there were enough rains in several parts of the country. The Government should have anticipated all these things. Now, what is happening? They are blaming each other. Whether Sharad Pawar is right in making certain statements which create panicky situation in the country. Whether DMK is right in taking a position on fertiliser prices. They are trying to blame each other and they are trying to blame the entire coalition politics. I don't think that coalition politics is bad. But, how do you manage coalition politics in the interests of the country and in the interests of the people? Here, Sir, some people think that when we criticise the Government, we don't give suggestions. Of course, we have given suggestions. We have been giving suggestions. When we supported the UPA-I Government, we did give suggestions, very meaningful suggestions, to control inflation and prices.

We had asked the Government at that point of time. Even today we are asking the Government: "Why can't you universalise the Public Distribution System?" What is the division of

the BPL and APL which is so defective, which is so deceptive, and this has to change? That is why we are asking: "Universalise the Public Distribution System, strengthen it, streamline it." Why can't you do it? But your approach is not to strengthen the Public Distribution System. Your approach is to gradually dismantle the Public Distribution System. This is one of our suggestions. Why can't the Government consider it? We ask the Government this thing. Even when Mr. Sharad Pawar became the Minister in the UPA-2 Government, we asked him, "Why can't he ban the future trade, particularly on essential commodities?" And many economists have acknowledged that the future trade push up the prices. Why can't the Government consider it? We ask the Government to strengthen the Essential Commodities Act. It is a Parliament. Parliament can take steps to strengthen the Essential Commodities Act. Why is the Government not doing it? It is easy to blame the BJP-led NDA Government. They have diluted that Act. But when you are in power, what are you doing? Why can't you strengthen the Essential Commodities Act? Why can't you take measures against black market and hoarding? When Madam Indira Gandhi was there as the Prime Minister, she did give some signals to the whole country initiating certain measures when she gave that slogan "Garibi Hatao" to really give confidence to the poor people of this country. But now when you are in power, the Congress-led U.P.A. Government, what are you doing? Now, you are trying to blame it on the State Governments. What the State Governments can do? At their level, they are trying their best. I know several States. In Tamil Nadu, the Public Distribution System is relatively better. In case of Kerala, I can go on saying that the Public Distribution System is one of the best effective in Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra, several States, they are trying their best. But who decides the macro level economic policies? It is the Union Government, It is your policies which led to such a situation in the country today, If you are always pledging your loyalty to the neo-liberal forces, the big business houses, the corporate sector, you are pleading helplessness before the market forces. You think that the market forces will bring down the prices. Wait for two months, wait for three months, the market forces will bring down the prices, then what is the use of having the Government? If everything has to be left to the market forces, what is the meaning of an elected Government having the people's strength behind it? What is the meaning of that Government? The Government has to intervene, the Government has to act. Now, our accusation is that the Government is not acting, the Government is not taking enough steps to control prices, and the Government should send a strong message. But see this Economic Survey. The Economic Survey admits that there is a gulf between the whole sale price index and the consumer price index. But the Economic Survey talks about the GDP rate up to 7.2 per cent. So, they are happy to have GDP rate. They are not concerned with the suffering of the people, with the miserable plight of the country. That is where we have a problem with the Government. Our accusation is that the Government has completely failed to control the prices, the Government has completely failed to take action against black market and hoarding. There can be mismatch between demand and supply. But as a Government, the Government should

have anticipated how to bridge the gap between demand and supply. You go to any shop, you have all the commodities available, but prices are high. Then what is the real management of demand and supply? This Government, in the name of free market economy, in the name of neo-liberalism, has failed to manage the economy. And what is the use of talking about productivity in agriculture, self-reliance? We have been talking about that. But the Government should act. If the Government does not act, what is the point in discussing all that? Then, it becomes politics. You don't take it as politics. We have not been doing politics on this issue, but you are doing politics. You are doing this politics in your Coalition. This entire politics in your Coalition should, come to an end if you want to protect the interests of the people. That is why, Sir, the CP has left. We urge upon the Government to act. If we don't act, this discussion is waste, I consider. Again, repeat what people think: 'You Parliamentarians, Parliament Members, can go on discussing. Discuss, discuss. Prices will keep going up!' Don't allow that cynicism. That cynicism with the people is dangerous to democracy. And if we believe in democracy, we want the Government to act. If you believe in democracy, you don't waste your time; you act. Now, people want action. This Parliament wants action on the part of Government to control the prices. That is what my submission is. Thanks.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Now, Dr. Ashok S. Ganguly.

DR. ASHOK S. GANGULY (Nominated): Hon. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am indeed, grateful to you for allowing me to speak. I had not intended to make an intervention, being a very new Member, and I hope my fellow Members will pardon. ...*(Interruptions)*... my short comings.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is your maiden speech.

DR. ASHOK S. GANGULY: Sir, my fellow hon. Members will pardon me if I say that I was bewildered; I was deeply hurt and bewildered that we spent so much time in order to decide whether to have a debate and how to have a debate. Maybe, that is the way of the House! And who am I to question that? But once the debate started, I think, there was a lot of wisdom, in the observation on both sides of the House, and I am encouraged by that—I understand, one of the Hon. Members just mentioned to me, hon. Members,—just because the debate on food prices has started in the House, retail prices have started going down! I do not know how far that is true. But if it is true, maybe, the House has the larger impact than we may be aware of. And, maybe, if we had started the debate yesterday, the prices might have gone down yesterday itself! But rise in food prices is a very serious issue. You know, there was a piece of news yesterday, in the newspapers, which I was shocked to

read, on 23rd of February, 2010, that there have been incidents of starvation deaths in Bolangir and Kalahandi. We have grown up, in this country, hearing about starving in Bolangir and Kalahandi, and it is indeed sad that it is even happening today. I think, it is a matter of shame to all of us, no matter which party one belongs to, or even if you don't belong to a party. Anybody dying of hunger in this country in this day and age is a matter of shame. Let us keep the prices for a moment aside; I will come back to that in a moment.

May I also submit, Sir, that '2015' is the year which has been designated by the United Nations as the year when hunger will end in this world? And it is very important for us to ensure that India is counted amongst those who have made a serious attempt in order to banish hunger by the year 2015. That is a larger debate, and a larger issue that we need to apply our minds to. But the point or the fact is that the drought that we have experienced, last year, is not an unusual event, some people will say, but that there might be more future frequent droughts in the countries which survive on monsoon, as India does. And the question is: is the agricultural pattern going to change? And, I think, a lot of research is going on in our agriculture universities. I know the Agriculture Minister is here; a lot of initiatives are being taken, but, I think, time is of the essence.

If we continue to debate for ever about the role of bio-engineering in order to improve the productivity, I think, we will lose a major initiative. If we continue to debate the need for nutrient-based fertiliser utilisation, we will lose critical opportunity. The problem is much larger than the price rise. The problem is of food security and agricultural productivity. It is a shame that our country loses 30 per cent to 40 per cent of the vegetable and fruit production due to wastage. No country in the world loses 30 per cent to 40 per cent of the vegetable and fruit production due to wastage. Yet, we don't wish to modernise our supply chain. Yet, we don't wish to modernise our retail trade. We continue to protect the vested interests of traditional traders and traditional middlemen. I think, it is a far larger issue that we have to apply our minds to and we have to find solutions. The Government is quite capable of finding solutions and the people in the Opposition are quite capable of finding and adding to these solutions.

I think, we are moving away from the core of the debate when we talk only about price rise. The issue of price rise is at the heart of a far bigger problem and a challenge that our country faces, that is, the challenge of bringing to the farmers modern seeds, nutrient-based applications and water management. One of the most neglected parts of our agricultural management is watershed management and water conservation. There are already satellite pictures which show enormous depletion in ground water level in Punjab, Haryana and other northern regions. It is well known that the flows to our rivers are in danger reducing as a consequence of global warming. It is well known

that our efforts to clean the pollution in Ganga and Yamuna have not yielded results that are required. Therefore, my request to my hon. colleagues is to raise issues for finding long-term solutions to the challenge that India faces. It is not only the Government that faces the challenge or the Opposition that faces the challenge or the people across the country that face the challenge, but indeed the entire nation faces the challenge of food security. If we don't take urgent, immediate and well-driven initiatives in those areas, we would fail our countrymen. I urge upon the Government to bring the scientists, policy makers, economists and the politicians together to find solutions to the challenge that India faces. No matter which party is in power or which party is in the Opposition, it is a national issue and it must be treated as the nation's highest priority. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, a very important discussion is taking place. At a time when the country is passing through an unprecedented rise in the prices of essential commodities, I think, our job is not to point a finger at anybody and to put the blame on him, but join hands and to share the burden. The point that the Government of India has not done anything is an accusation. The Government has taken many conceivable measures necessary to bring down the prices. Yet, the war against the rising prices is going on. What is required is a much deeper understanding to tackle the issue more efficiently.

Sir, the paucity of time may not permit going deep into the issue. I have something to say which is very essential. Since the discussion has waited for three days to take place, what we have to do is to analyse what has been done so far and what has to be done hereafter. In this federal structure the Government of India and the States have to work together to achieve the long-term objective. We have realised that and I can speak about the State from which I come. Everyone is aware that rise in food prices would eventually feed into manufactured goods and lead to spiralling inflation. Everyone is aware that the factors for the rise in prices include increasing demand, burgeoning international prices, increase in MSP, adverse weather conditions, hoarding and heavy freight charges. So, what has to be done? Before I say anything, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government and the hon. Ministers to consider the two recommendations which have been made by the Standing Committee on Finance in its Sixth Report on inflation and price rise. One, the Department of Consumer Affairs, which is the nodal monitoring agency, seems to have been reduced to a mere data collecting or compiling organisation. The inputs collected by it were not influencing the price policy, which is the domain of the Ministry of Finance, thus leaving virtually no impact on the prices of essential commodities. The Committee recommended an effective mechanism for Inter-Ministerial coordination and follow up. Two, a comprehensive food pricing and management policy

has to be formulated. Sir, instability in the prices of agricultural commodities is mainly due to the instability in the production and supply level. The lasting solution to the volatile prices of agricultural commodities, particularly cereals, pulses and edible oils is only to improve the production. The Government of India in its many schemes, especially the National Food Security Scheme, has been focussing on issues of production and productivity in commodities having critical shortage. But what I would like to say as a red alert to the Government and to everyone of us — it must be taken note of very seriously — that the area under foodgrains has declined by 8 per cent from 2008-09 to 2010, that is, in 2008, it was 680.99 lakh hectares and now it is only 626.47 lakh hectares. Almost 55 lakh hectares have declined from being agriculture land to industrial sites. Sir, this is alarming. When the need is becoming more, the producing area is becoming less. We should accept that the expansion of this area is quite impossible in the coming days. So, only increasing the productivity with a long term programme can do something.

Sir, so far as the delivery system is concerned, I should say, the Tamil Nadu Government stands as a role model to many other States, which everyone accepts. I must say it here that the rice production is diminishing. My colleagues have also pointed it out. Punjab and Haryana States are producing 4,000 and 3,600 kilo of rice respectively; whereas Tamil Nadu has got a rice intensification system, a method which has shown a very good improvement in the production of paddy. But at the same time, other rice producing States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and Orissa are not up to the average. So the Government has to concentrate on these things. We are depending on other countries for rice, it is not acceptable to us. Taiwan, Vietnam and some other countries are exporting rice to us. The African countries are very much in need of rice. If we increase the productivity, we can also export rice.

Sir, in the case of sugar, the second very important point, which has been pointed out by many of my colleagues, the Government has increased the entitlement of levy sugar from 10 per cent to 20 per cent, from 1st October, 2009. But at the same time, the allocations of levy sugar to the States have not been increased. Sir, it must be taken note of that while 20 per cent has been taken as levy and 65 per cent of the sugar is being consumed by soft drink manufacturers and confectioners, only 15 per cent goes to the market. When this thing happens, when the Government has reduced import duty on sugar to zero per cent, they can induce these bulk buyers to import sugar or they can improve the buffer stock. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, I am proud to say, Sir, and rather I should register here what we have done, as against the Government of India's allocation of 10,832 tonnes of levy sugar, the State is distributing around 35,000 tonnes of sugar at the rate of Rs. 13.50/- per kilo to all the families through the PDS. And the balance quantity of sugar

is procured by the State at the open market rate from Sugar Federations bearing a huge subsidy, under State Budget, so as to save poor and the middle-class from the rising price of sugar. This has added additional subsidy burden on the State to the tune of around Rs.500 crores in the current year. This shows how we are sharing the burden, with the Central Government, in the matter of subsidy on food prices. Our food subsidy amounts to Rs.4,000 crores, out of which Rs.2,800 crores pertains to rice alone. The Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu is one of the best in the country, and I should say, with a very, very clear conscience that we follow the universal Public Distribution System, which has proved better than the targeted Public Distribution System, wherein all the card holders, including the families which are above poverty line, are provided 20 kgs of rice per month at Rs.1 per kg. This is the only State in the whole country which has done this, and the Government of India and the Members, cutting across political parties, have appreciated it.

Another thing is pulses. We have had deficit of pulses for many decades. We are importing pulses because the pulses are grown mostly on dry lands and margin lands, but we do not concentrate on that. It is estimated that the deficit of pulses now is 3 lakh tonnes, and the Planning Commission has projected that by 2011-12, it would go up. So, we have to concentrate more on it, and I would again bring it to the notice of the hon. Minister because these suggestions will help him save people from the present situation, and encourage States which are sharing the burden. Instead of imposing levy on States, which, actually, have deficit, they can redistribute surplus rice from the neighbouring States. For example, Andhra Pradesh is with surplus. Our leader, Dr. Kalaignar, who is leading the State of Tamil Nadu, has rightly said that a kilo of foodgrains in a poor man's house is more valuable than in the godown of the Government. Instead of keeping it there, rice must be taken out, and it should be redistributed to other States, which would help the Government to assist the people at this point of time. So, the major things are rice, sugar and pulses. And, to tackle the rising prices which are burdening the people more, I would like to give some suggestions, some very, very important suggestions. The Government of India should enhance the allocation of APL rice and wheat to the States, as the allocation was re-fixed three years back, when the off take was very low. With the Public Distribution System, the sale of rice is on the increase. Due to high market price, it is necessary that the States could draw more stocks from the Central Pool and make it available to the public. Allocation of foodgrains under the Open Market Scheme or ad hoc allocation at economic cost is not an attractive proposition to many States...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Further, selling at the open market rate through PDS outlets creates more administrative problems inherent with dual prices. Sir, the second thing pertains to amendments to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. These are very much needed to ensure that hoarders and smugglers do not get away with simple punishments. As the stringent 1981



Amendments have lapsed, it is necessary to reintroduce these provisions by making the offences cognisable and non-bailable. As far as fertiliser prices are concerned, we are of a strong view that the prices should not increase, and it should not burden the poor people. Our leader has already written to the Prime Minister about it, and our Minister has also suggested it to the Government. So, we, from Tamil Nadu, that too working under the Chief Minister, Dr. Kalaingar, are always for the poor and the middle-class people, and we have always shared the burden of the Government of India. We are functioning as a performing State in this federal structure. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before I call Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, the Minister of External Affairs has to make a statement.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Sir, the hon. Minister can lay the Statement on the Table of the House.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you can lay it on the Table of the House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): Sir, it is a lengthy Statement. If the House agrees, I will lay it on the Table of the House; and on some other day, Members can seek clarifications on it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, clarifications will be sought later. ...*(Interruptions)*...

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#### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS *(Contd.)*

##### Attacks on Indians in Australia

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I rise to inform the House about the recent attacks on Indian nationals in Australia and the steps being taken by Government of India as well as by the Australian Government in dealing with various issues involved.

The attacks on Indian students have been coming to our notice for over two years now, since 2007 when some students were assaulted in Sydney. In 2008 and 2009 also, there were other sporadic instances of assaults on Indian students, including some working as taxi drivers in Melbourne and in Adelaide. However, it is since May 2009 that there seems to have been a significant increase in the number and frequency of attacks on Indians in Australia. This has coincided with the substantial increase in the number of Indian students studying in Australia over the last three years, with a 141% increase recorded in just two years from 2006 to 2008.

The attacks continued in a sporadic manner till May, 2009. On 9 May, a student named Saurabh Sharma was attacked in a train by a gang of 4-5 people. On 23 May, 2009, a young student studying in Melbourne, Sravan Kumar Theerthala was savagely attacked with a screw driver, resulting in serious injuries to his head. On 2nd January 2010, a student Mr. Nitin Garg was attacked late at night while crossing a park in a Melbourne suburb on his way to work. He later died in the