

**MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** The House stands adjourned for lunch for one hour.

The House then adjourned for lunch at forty minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at forty-one minutes past two of the clock. [MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

### **Discussion on the working of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**

**MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** We shall now take up discussion on the working of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. Shri Uday Pratap Singh to raise the discussion. But where is the Whip? There is no Cabinet Minister.

**SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Andhra Pradesh):** Sir, the Minister is here.

**श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश):** धन्यवाद, उपसभापति जी। यह एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण विषय है जिस पर आपने मुझे इस बहस को शुरू करने की अनुमति दी है।

जैसाकि अभी आपने कहा, यहां महत्वपूर्ण लोगों को होना चाहिए था, तो मेरे मन में यह सवाल आया और उसे मैं आपके सामने रख रहा हूं। यह बहस आम तौर से दो तरह की होती है— एक तो निर्गुण बहस होती है और दूसरी सगुण बहस होती है। अगर निर्गुण बहस हो और कबीर की भाषा में बोला जाये तो कुछ समझ में आया, कुछ नहीं आया, लेकिन वास्तव में आज जो बहस होनी है, वह हिंदुस्तान के लाखों गरीबों और गरीबी रेखा के नीचे रहने वाले लोगों से संबंधित है। अब “गरीबी रेखा” यह शब्द भी बहुत प्राचीन हो गया है। आज के संदर्भ में इसका मतलब ही नहीं रह गया है। माननीय उपसभापति जी, आज सुदूर गांवों में ऐसे-ऐसे लोग हैं जिन्हें तीन-तीन दिन खाना नहीं मिलता। महोदय, मेरे पास विभिन्न अखबारों की कटिंग्स हैं जिनमें यह लिखा हुआ है कि पब्लिक डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन सिस्टम का 67 प्रतिशत सामान चोरी चला जाता है। किसी-किसी में यह भी लिखा है कि अंत्योदय स्कीम और जो गरीबों को अन्न पहुंचाने वाली स्कीम है, अगर इन्हें बंद कर दिया जाए तो उससे ज्यादा लोगों का हित होगा क्योंकि इन के चलते उन लोगों का ज्यादा नुकसान हो रहा है।

उपसभापति जी, मेरे पास ऐसी कम-से-कम 10-20 प्रकार की खबरें हैं। मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि बफर स्टॉक बनाने से लेकर, एफसीआई के गोदामों में रख-रखाव, अन्न की खरीदी और वितरण प्रणाली के द्वारा उसे गरीबों तक पहुंचाए जाने का मसला एक विषय है और कंजूमर्स जो गरीबी रेखा के नीचे नहीं हैं, उनके लिए मसला दूसरा है। मैं इन दोनों पर अलग-अलग बात करना चाहता हूं। हमारी सरकार के आंकड़ों के हिसाब से 17 करोड़ परिवार भारतवर्ष में गरीबी रेखा के

नीचे हैं। यहां मैं एक बात यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि पहले तो हिंदुस्तान में परिवार की परिभाषा बहुत निश्चित नहीं है। अगर एक परिवार में 4 लोगों को मान लें तो सीधी-सी बात यह है कि करीब 30 करोड़ लोग ऐसे हैं जिन्हें खाना नहीं मिलता और वह खाना नहीं मिलता जैसाकि मिलना चाहिए। फिर आपके आंकड़ों के हिसाब से 300 से 400 मिलियन लोग एक दिन में एक बार खाना खाते हैं। उपसभापति जी, ये आंकड़े इतने भयानक लगते हैं कि दुनिया के उन्नतिशील देशों में तो लोग इस पर विश्वास ही नहीं करेंगे। महोदय, कहीं-कहीं तो इससे भी ज्यादा भयानक स्थिति हैं। हमारे यहां ये खबरें आती हैं कि एक सप्ताह के खाने के लिए माताएं अपने बच्चों को बेच देती हैं। यह गरीबी की स्थिति है। महोदय, मैं इस प्रक्रिया के शुरू से अपनी बात कहना चाहता हूँ। किसान जिससे हम अन्न खरीदते हैं, उसकी भी हालत बहुत अच्छी नहीं है और उसके माल की जो कीमत हम निर्धारित करते हैं, उसमें भी भ्रष्टाचार होता है। सरकारी कर्मचारियों की मिलीभगत से जो पैसा किसानों को मिलना चाहिए, वह नहीं मिल पाता है। सबसे बड़ी बात यह है कि हिन्दुस्तान में किसान सबसे ज्यादा पीड़ित और दुखी हैं। मेरा कहना यह है कि अगर इन लोगों को, गरीबी की रेखा से नीचे जो लोग हैं, उनके लिए अन्न पहुंचाया जाना बहुत जरूरी है, यह हम स्वीकार करते हैं, लेकिन जिन लोगों से हम अन्न खरीदते हैं, उनको भी चाहे सब्सिडी के माध्यम से, चाहे किसी भी प्रकार से, कम-से-कम उनके प्रोडक्शन-कॉस्ट का पैसा उनको मिल जाए, इस बात को भी सुनिश्चित करना हमारा फर्ज है। इसके बाद मैं एक बात यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे एफ॰सी॰आई॰ के जो गोदाम हैं, उनकी इमारतों का जो हाल है और उनमें रखे हुए गेहूँ का जो हाल है, कुछ का तो यह हाल हो जाता है कि वे जानवरों के खाने तक के लायक नहीं रहते, इसके बावजूद, एक तरफ कालाहांडी में अकाल पड़ता रहता है और दूसरी तरफ हमारे बफर स्टॉक में, हमारे एफ॰सी॰आई॰ के जो गोदाम हैं, उनमें अन्न सड़ता रहता है। माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी ने एक कमेटी बनाई, जिसका नाम है- “फूड न्यूट्रीशन सेक्योरिटी वाच” और उसमें उन्होंने एक सेंटेंस कहा है कि हमने क्यों बनाई। उन्होंने जो कहा, मैं कोट कर रहा हूँ—

“Mr. Singh, who wants to emphasise on outcomes and not merely outlays, has been talking about the need to improve the activeness of public spending. At the recent Policy Session, the Prime Minister had said,— यह खास ध्यान से सुनने की बात है।... “The country cannot allow a situation to persist where food supplies and accumulative stocks co-exist with starvation deaths and malnutrition.”

यानी, मैं यह जो कहना चाहता हूँ, जो मैंने शुरू में कहा कि निर्गुण बहस होगी या सगुण बहस होगी, इसमें कुछ ऐसा तो है नहीं कि आपकी मालूमात में नहीं है। स्थिति यह हो रही है कि न तो उस किसान को सही दाम मिलता है और न जो रख-रखाव हो रहा है, उसका स्तर सही है। उपसभापति जी, उसमें बहुत बड़ा भ्रष्टाचार होता है। एक इकॉनॉमिस्ट ने एक सर्वे किया और यह पाया कि एक रुपया का अन्न जब हम गांव वालों तक पहुंचाते हैं, उसमें सरकार का 20 रुपया खर्च आता है और हम इस बात की कतई परवाह नहीं करते। अगर भूखे आदमी को गेहूँ पहुंचाने के लिए, एक रुपया

पहुंचाने के लिए, 20 रुपए से भी ज्यादा खर्च हो जाए तो वह चिन्ता की बात नहीं है। चिन्ता की बात तो तब है कि क्या इतना खर्च करने के बाद भी उसका लाभ उसको मिल पाता है? किसी गरीब आदमी की जान बचाने के लिए हमारा कुछ भी खर्च हो जाए, यह बहुत महत्वपूर्ण चीज नहीं है। अभी उड़ीसा में कुछ दिन पहले एक योजना थी, काम के बदले अन्न देने की योजना और जब वह योजना सफल नहीं हुई तो वहां के सरकारी अधिकारियों ने कहा कि वे लोग काम करना नहीं चाहते, इसलिए हम उनको अन्न नहीं दे पाए। हम लोगों का यह मानना है कि चाहे वे काम करें या न करें, उनकी जान बचाने के लिए जो प्रावधान किया गया था, वे चाहे काम थोड़ा करते या ज्यादा करते, उन तक वह अन्न पहुंचाया जाता। इस प्रकार यह जो सारा डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम है, मैंने उसका एक नक्शा आपको पेश किया। मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि इसके लिए बहुत कड़े कानून बनाए जाने चाहिए और इतने कड़े कानून बनाए जाने चाहिए, जिससे कि तमाम दोषी लोगों को दंडित किया जा सके। यह तो मैं अभी इस हिस्से पर आया हूं, जब दूसरे हिस्से पर आऊंगा तो उसमें मिलावट की बात करूंगा। हमारे यहां दूध की बोतल में मछली निकलती है। दिल्ली दुग्ध योजना के दूध की बोतल में एक छोटी-सी मछली निकली, यह क्या साबित करती है? मछली तो भैंस के थन से निकली नहीं थी, मछली तो पानी की मिलावट से हुई थी। जो लोग खाने में मिलावट करते हैं, उनको कड़ी-से-कड़ी सजा दी जानी चाहिए। अब मैं मृत्यु दण्ड की बात कहना तो ठीक नहीं समझता, लेकिन आजीवन कारवास उनको हो, इस प्रकार का कोई प्रावधान, जैसे दुनिया के दूसरे देशों में हैं, हमारे देश में भी होना चाहिए। ऐसे लोगों को और बड़ी-से-बड़ी कंपनियों को, उन्नतिशील देश कटघरे में खड़ा करके उन्हें उनकी हैसियत बता देते हैं। हमारे देश में अजीब तमाशा है कि जो लोग, कंज्यूमर्स फोरम हैं, वह सबसे ज्यादा दुखी रहता है और वह इसमें इतनी बुरी तरह मिलावट का शिकार होता है, जिसका कि कोई इलाज अभी तक सरकार के पास नहीं है।

मैं एक बात और कहना चाहता हूं कि हमारे यहां जो कंज्यूमर फोरम हैं, वे उतने सक्रिय नहीं जितने कि उनको होना चाहिए। मैं सरकार से अपील करूंगा कि जितनी भी राज्य सरकारें हैं, कंज्यूमर फोरम के एक्टिविट्स हैं और जो इसमें सरकारी अधिकारी हैं, इन सबसे मिलकर कोई ऐसी नीति बनाई जाए जिससे कि पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम उपयोगी हो सके और उसका लाभ उन लोगों को मिले, जिनको अब तक लाभ नहीं मिल पाया है।

उपसभापति महोदय, अब मैं इसके दूसरे हिस्से पर, जो आम आदमी के लिए है, आता हूं। पहली बात मैं कहूंगा कि सरकार को विज्ञापनों पर, असत्य विज्ञापनों पर रोक लगानी चाहिए। जब से इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मीडिया आया है, एक के बाद एक अनेक ऐसे विज्ञापन आते हैं—अगर एक मिनट के लिए हमने यह किया तो हमारी खांसी ठीक हो गई, दूसरे मिनट में आता है कि हमने योग किया तो हमारा शरीर ठीक हो गया, तीसरे मिनट में आता है कि हमने यह किया तो यह ठीक हो गया, तो यह सब जो बाजारवाद पर खर्चा किया जा रहा है और जो विज्ञापन किए जाते हैं, उनसे उपभोक्ता को बहुत बड़ा नुकसान होता है और वह बड़े झंझट में फंसा रहता है। मैं चाहूंगा कि इस पर भी किसी

प्रकार की रोक लगाने का काम किया जाए और यह सुनिश्चित किया जाए कि उनमें कहां तक सच्चाई है।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, मैं एक छोटी सी कविता पढ़ना चाहूंगा, वह यह है:—

हमने क्या काम किया ऐसे अभारों के लिए  
जिनकी मेहनत से हमें ताज मिला, तख्त मिला  
उनके सपनों के जनाजों में तो शामिल होते  
हमको शतरंज की चालों से नहीं वक्त मिला।

मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ:—

हमने देखे नहीं भूख से मरते इंसान  
सिलसिले मौत के जो बंद नहीं होते हैं  
उनके पैबंद लगे चिथड़े ये गवाही देते  
उनके किरदार में पैबंद नहीं होते हैं।

मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे यहां बहुत बड़ी संख्या में लोग हैं, जिनको ये कष्ट हैं और हम उन्हें देखते रहते हैं। इसलिए मैं आप लोगों से यह निवेदन करूंगा कि इस पर बहुत गहराई, गंभीरता से विचार किया जाए और इस मुद्दे पर सब लोगों के साथ मिल-जुलकर प्रभावी काम किया जाए ताकि इसका लाभ अंत के लोगों तक पहुंच सके।

इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं आपको धन्यवाद देते हुए अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ।

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR (Karnataka): Sir, I am very thankful to you for having given me this opportunity to speak on a very important subject. Food and Civil Supplies is a very important subject. As you know, food is required by all. There are different varieties of food. But everyone has to eat food. You may eat *biryani*; I may eat *jowar ki roti and chutney*; but it is a must. That is why I think this is one of the most important subjects. I am happy to say before this august House that our godowns today are totally full and there is no dearth of foodgrains. Nobody is going to die of hunger. At Independence, our population was 33 crores and there was a time when we used to import food from America. But what type of food was it? The food that had been rejected by animals in America, was being sent to us and we were taking that food. But we were not in a position to eat that. Today, our population has increased by three times. We are nearly one hundred crores today. I am proud to say that our godowns are full. My previous speaker said that people were dying of hunger. I don't think they are dying of hunger. First of all, I would like to congratulate the farmers of

my country who have done so much of hard work to make us self-sufficient in foodgrains. Due to their hard work, today, we are self-sufficient in food grains. But, I would like to say that having sufficient stocks in hand is not enough. There are so many things that we have to take care of. The main thing is, there should be proper distribution of foodgrains to the poor people who are really in need of it. Sir, here, I would like to give one example. A housewife or a mother in a house cooks many varieties of dishes and keeps it in the cupboard; and without distributing it to her husband or children, she goes away. What is the use of that food? It is of no use. Here also, it is the same thing. If we have a big stock of foodgrains and it is not distributed to the poor people, then it is of no use for them. So, distribution is a very, very important factor in Food and Civil Supplies.

Sir, first of all, we have to take care of our farmers and their problems. We know that nowadays many farmers have committed suicides. We have to think of that. We cannot blame this Government and that Government for this and say that it has happened like that. We must find out the reasons why the farmers are committing suicides. If there is more production, there is problems for the farmer. If there is no production, there is also problem for the farmer. In case of more production, he has to face the problem of how and where to keep the foodgrains safely. If there is no production, then, he has to think how to face the situation. If his crop is lost due to drought or other things, that is also a very bad thing for him.

Sir, if a farmer goes to a shopkeeper for buying a thing, then, he has to pay the price which is asked by the shopkeeper. Supposing, he goes to the shop and asks for pesticides or something else, he has to pay the price which is asked by the shopkeeper. On the other hand, if a farmer has to sell a thing, he has to depend completely on the buyer. We have got so many farms. You take the example of watermelons. If a farmer wants to sell a piece of watermelon, he quotes the price as ten rupees. But, the buyer offers him five rupees for that piece of watermelon and he agrees to sell it. The same piece of watermelon passes through the hands of a broker, trader, and when the same piece of watermelon finally reaches the market, it costs thirty-five rupees to the consumer. That shows that there is a middleman between the farmer and the consumer. This middleman between the farmer and the consumer is important. The farmer is not getting the price of which he has struggled the whole year. He takes so much of trouble in raising his crops. So, the Government has to take care of the middleman.

3.00 P.M.

Sir, basically, we are concerned with the management of foodgrains. The Government's first task is to ensure a remunerative price for the farmers. Our main intention is to protect the interests of farmers so that they are not cheated by brokers or *dalals* or agents. It is the duty of the Government to have proper procurement of foodgrains. The Government has to perform the duty of safe and scientific storage of foodgrains, its transportation and then its distribution to the States. For scientific and safe storage of foodgrains, we have set up godown all over the country. We have got a number of godown throughout the country. But the thing is, we have only one big godown for every four-five districts. What happens is, it is very difficult for the farmers to take the foodgrains in large quantities from one district to the other district where the godown is there. That is why, our request and the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Food and Civil Supplies is that there should be a godown at each and every district so that farmers would not have any problem in carrying their foodgrains.

For storage, we have got two types of godowns. One type of godowns is called CAP. The CAP is a temporary structure where foodgrains are stored in an open space, near railway station or on any other ground, where a temporary shed is made and the foodgrains are stored. The covered storage type is, as my colleague mentioned just now, the ones which have buildings. These buildings should be very safe. As the Member said, our godown buildings should be safe enough to keep the foodgrains in a good manner, because we have to be careful about rains and other things.

Secondly, Sir, I would like to touch on the transportation. Transportation is mainly by railway, by road, by ship or any other transport. But in railways, the Government has to take particular care about wagons. There are such wagons where we can't say that we can transport foodgrains in those wagons, because somewhere, some leakage is there, something is there. If some water goes inside, the entire thing goes bad. So, the railways has to take particular care of wagons.

Then comes distribution to the States. The distribution will be as per the demands of the States. In case we have got more stocks, then we will give full storage and if there is no stock we have adjust with all the States. The States then would distribute it to the beneficiaries. There too, there are two categories. In our country, we have got APL and BPL. Most of the people in Parliament may not know what APL means. It means, 'Above Poverty Line'. BPL means 'Below Poverty Line'. I think,

almost all of us here are APL pepole. So, they do not have an idea of APL. In BPL too, there is Antyodaya and TPDS. Antyodaya means the most needy people. TPDS means, 'Targeted Public Distribution Scheme'. It also includes welfare schemes, 'mid-day meals scheme', food to the destitute homes and other things. What is APL? It means, there are people who can go to the market and buy things. They are in a position to spend money and can give whatever rate is there and purchase. They are called APL people. Who are BPL people? People like me who cannot go to the market and buy things. *(Interruptions)*

You do not give us a chance to speak for even two minutes for ladies. My hand was painning yesterday like any thing. Our Chairman did not give me a chance to speak and I could not say anything. I had to keep quite. So, from yesterday, I am feeling that I am BPL. That is why you are not caring for me. So you know, Sir. ....*(Interruptions)*... This is Jairam's brain. ....*(Interruptions)*... Generally, the APL families get five to 10 kgs. rice per family. Kerosene is not given to them because they are the APL families and they use only gas. But with this rice and wheat, they are not given sugar. You may ask why I am going into the details. Sir, I am a Member of the Standing Committee on Food. So, I think, it is my duty to make everybody understand what is the reality because just now my colleague said that there are people who are dying of hunger, as there is no food. It is not like that. You must know what is the position of the Government and what is our position. Then, Sir comes the BPL. For BPL we give about 20 to 22 Kgs. rice. They are also given kerosene and sugar. This Antyodaya is a part of the BPL. Antyodaya means the most needy people, who are poorest of the poor. They are known as Antyodaya. We give them rice at the rate of Rs. 3 per kgs. and wheat at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg. But, Sir, here the rice which we give them at the rate of Rs. 3 per kgs., that is not the real cost of the rice. The cost is nearly Rs. 7 to Rs. 8 per kg. Here the subsidy is Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per kgs., which the Government is paying for rice and also for wheat. So, the burden of this money is on our Government. We should not think that the Government is not doing anything. It may be any Government — my Government or that Government or the earlier Government. But this subsidy burden is on the Government. I am sorry to say that this subsidy burden per year is to the tune of Rs. 26,000 crores per year. The Government is giving this amount as subsidy. Sir, most of the subsidy is given on Antyodaya, that is, the BPL. This is what the last year records show. The Government had given 6.15 per cent of the total subsidy to the APL. Now, this is 6.58 per cent of the total subsidy given to

the APL. Sir, I think, this is completely a waste because these rich people do not go to the Fair Price Shops. They do not buy anything from there. The shopkeepers get the entire stock and, this Rs. 3 per kg. is sold by these Fair Price Shops at the rate of Rs. 12 to Rs. 16 per kg. They get so much stock that it mostly remains with them. The benefit goes to the shopkeepers. Sir, by this, as you know, Sir, we are using Rs. 1655 crores for APL. This money is going waste. Unnecessarily we are spending and we are losing Rs. 1655 crores on APL people who do not require anything at subsidised rates. They do not buy anything. Their cards are simply lying in their houses. This was the position last year. This year it has been raised to Rs. 2586 crores. See, Sir, so much is being wasted. So, our Committee is asking the Government, why you want to spend money unnecessarily on APL. Spend this money on Antyodaya, the poor people who really need it. You spend that money on them and do some good work. I would like to tell you something about my State Karnataka. ...*(Interruptions)*... He is APL, Karnataka. He does not know. ...*(Interruptions)*... He only eats *biryani*s and basmati rice. ...*(Interruptions)*... He is not like me. I am a BPL. Sharad Pawarji knows that I am from Belgaum and we eat *jawar ki roti*. Our Former Minister in Karnataka has done a very good job on this. We are given yellow cards and they are for BPL. They are BPL cards. Those who got BPL cards get about twenty to twenty-eight kgs. of rice. Secondly, there was a mention about godowns. Godown also is a very important thing. We have two types of godowns, Food Corporation of India godown and; Central Warehousing Corporation godown. No doubt, there are a good number of godowns in four to five districts. As I said, the Government should think of having one godown in each district. There won't be any problem.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: How much time do you require?

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: A little more time, Sir, I am a lady. I am a BPL. Total capacity of a godown is 236.35 lakh metric tonnes. Central Warehousing godown capacity is 94 lakh tonnes capacity. State Warehousing godown capacity is 206.81 lakh tonnes. Now, I will talk about stocks. Since you are mentioning about time, I have to be little sensible.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have not spoken anything about Karnataka. You said, 'my Karnataka' and after that you have not spoken anything.

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: I will tell you. About stock, I have already said that we are very happy and we have got such a huge stock. At the



same time. Sir, we have to think about losses also. This is only a structure. We have got so much of loss in this also. In FCI, we have got lot of losses. More than Rs. 1000 crores per year is lost on account of shortage and transit losses. This is only because of the inefficiency of FCI. FCI is not at all careful. They do not take proper care and food is wasted. There are so many rats, so many birds. Food is wasted. So much of water seeps into the bags and the grains are spoilt. This is all because of the negligence of FCI. So, why should we pay for the negligence of FCI? The Government has to take particular care. Secondly, there is proxy labour. This is very important in our country. Everywhere you go there is proxy. So, here also there is proxy labour. For that, Sir, the Committee has noticed with concern the existence of the system of proxy labour in FCI in the Standing Committee's report while examining the Demands for Grants for 2004-05. Proxy labour system reflects replacement of regular labour. The Parliamentary Standing Committee in its meeting held in August, 2004 has suggested the following steps: each and every worker should put one signature or thumb impression as a token of attendance. Secondly, introduction of mechanical gate entry devices for punching card system with thumb impression should be there. Thirdly, the demand for wages to all workers should be only through cheques, as per the provisions in the Income Tax Act, and signing of daily work output slip by each labour at the end of the day, counter-signed by the Mandal-in-charge. So, Sir this proxy labour is a very big problem and there are a lot of losses in that. So, Sir, if you give me only three minutes...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will give you three minutes, but not more than that.

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: I will take only three minutes. So, Sir, I would like to say something. It is a question of commonsense. In Karnataka, we had a discussion and some rules were framed to detect a BPL family. In the meeting it was said that there are rules. It has been prescribed that if the annual income of a person exceeds so much, then he will not get a BPL Card. What we have to say here is, even a sweeper gets Rs. 4,000 per month. In a family, if husband, wife and son are all sweepers, they will get Rs. 12,000 per month. They are staying in a slum. So, you cannot say that they are getting Rs. 12,000 hence they are not covered under BPL norms. That is one point.

The second criterion is, if you have a two-wheeler in a family, you should not be given a BPL Card. Sir, now-a-days, two-wheeler is not a

luxury item. If a person has to go to his workplace, which is 10 to 15 kms. away, do you think he can go by walk or wait for bus which comes after one hour? So, commonsense says that two-wheeler is not a luxury.

The third criterion is Television. What is this? In a country like India having a Rs. 4,000 television is luxury? Do you think that is luxury for a poor man? Should they not watch programmes on Television? There are people who are having their own aircraft...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): So, you are arguing for APL.

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: I am arguing for BPL.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: She wants a new definition for the BPL.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will you yield for a minute? ..(*Interruptions*)... She wants a new definition for the BPL..*(Interruptions)*...I was just wondering, if such a wonderful thing is there, why are there so many starvation deaths taking place in Karnataka? Why there are so many starvation deaths in 'my Karnataka'?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: According to her, there are no starvation deaths..*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: She is now arguing for APL. Having said that, she is asking that it should be excluded from the PDS.

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Having a television worth of Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000 is not a luxury. Now-a-days, this is also a necessity. Everybody has to see what is going on in Parliament, how *jhagdas* are going on, how chairs are thrown at each other, how the Members fight, etc. Everything should be seen by the villagers. That is why we have removed all these norms and we have given BPL Cards to everybody.

Now, I want to say only one point about the farmers. There has to be some restriction even on farmers. There are some sections of farmers where restrictions are required. We have got respect for them. We do not want that they should starve. But, what happens is, supposing, this year, if they feel that tomato fetches more money or sugarcane fetches more money, all the farmers sow only tomatoes or sugarcane. They have got so much stock that about six months ago in Karnataka, they had to throw tomatoes on the road. Shri Sharad Pawar is sitting here. He knows it very well. Sugarcane production was so much that in the border areas of Belgaum we had to burn sugarcane because crushing facilities were not there,

factories were very busy and they could not take it. That is why there has to be some restriction on the farmers also.

With these words, which you may or may not have liked, I have to conclude my speech. Now, I give an opportunity to all my other colleagues so that they may express their difficulties in their own States. Thank you.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Kerala): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, today, we are discussing the working the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. This Ministry is closely connected with the poorer sections of our society. It is being led by a very efficient Minister. After becoming a Minister, his intervention has been very much positive. However, if we go through the realities that are prevailing in the countryside of our nation, I would not be able to make positive comments about him because the statistics show that there has been a fall in the production of rice in this year. In respect of rice, the procurement was less and the production is also coming down. Not only rice, but the total grain production is not increasing up to the expected level. Our population is increasing at the rate of 1.97 per cent, while the increase in food production is 1.7 per cent. A sharp fall in the availability of foodgrains in our country is reported. It almost dropped to an all-time low of less 143 kg per head. Similarly, availability of pulses also dropped to 10 kg per head. On the one hand, we talk about the increasing food production and the contents in the FCI godowns, on the other hand, in real terms, the availability is dropping. Similarly, calorie intake of the poor people has also come down. The daily per capita calorie intake from all foods, not just from foodgrains, has been slowly falling in urban areas, and at a faster rate in rural areas. According to the NSS data, the period of 1983—93 had seen a sharp drop in calorie intake— from 2221 calories to 2153 calories. The only exceptions in this regard were Kerala and West Bengal. All the other States in our country had reported a fall in the calorie intake. The argument, which comes for this fall in calorie intake, is that people have begun to consume fish, eggs, meat, fruits, etc. That is not the reality. In the developed countries, the calorie intake from eggs, fish, meat, fruits, etc. is 66 per cent and from cereals is 33 per cent. While in our country, 66 per cent of calorie intake is from cereals and 33 per cent is from eggs, fish, meat, fruits, etc. The advanced countries, for example China, absorbed 320 kg cereals per head in the mid-nineties. Mexico also absorbs 375 kg cereals per head. Whereas, the high-income nations, like Japan, the USA, North-American countries and some European countries, absorb more than four times as compared to India, with the USA registering the consumption of 850 kg

per head annually, of which 200 kg was direct consumption and the remaining from the animal products. So, whatever arguments our esteemed economists, who are supporting the globalization, give, is a negative picture. That is not the reality. Even in the advanced countries much more per head foodgrain consumption is reported. Only exception is the sub-Saharan countries. Why does this happen? What is the reason for the fall in the intake of foodgrains? That is to be discussed and addressed properly. Fortunately, in this country we are not seriously discussing about the sharp fall in the foodgrain production. It was reported that during the last one decade the net area under cultivation is coming down. Nearly about seven lakh hectares of land on which foodgrains were being cultivated, is not being cultivated now. What is the reason? We have to address this issue. Here the problem is very clear. The farmers are not in a position to cultivate their land. The policies pursued during the last one-and-a-half decade were against the interest of the Indian farmer. The input we had in agriculture, it has come down. That is the main reason. So, the fall in the input in agriculture, failure in development of infrastructure, failure in providing irrigation facilities etc., is adversely affecting the food security of this nation. The policy pursued by the previous Government is also adversely affecting the food security. There is a conspiracy to destroy the self-sufficiency in food of this country. Will this Government succumb to that pressure? This has to be explained before the country. There is no doubt that there is a pressure on policy makers. The WTO is pressurising you against the existing policies and the new policies are in front of you. You are against the subsidies. Now, the proposal is in front of the Finance Ministry. They came up with proposals with regard to subsidies. They are against the Minimum Support Price. They are against fertilizer subsidy. They are against the PDS. Now the proposal is in front of this Government. What would be the approach of the Government? This has to be explained before this House. Sir, if such an incident is going to take place in our country, then that would be very much damaging to the interest of the nation. For example, with regard to direct subsidies paid by the Central Government, in our country, it is only 1.85 per cent of the GDP. It is not increasing, it is coming down. It was 1.85 per cent in 1990-91, and, in 2003-04, it was only 1.6 per cent of the GDP. So, in GDP terms, the subsidy is very low.

There is a move even to curtail the subsidy on LPG and kerosene. On all these issues, the Government has to come out with a correct perspective and explain this to the country. If you are going to do anything

which is against the interest of the farmer, then, that would be very much negative.

There is a move to stop this Minimum Support Price and to introduce a crop insurance scheme. The suggestion was this crop insurance scheme should be there without any subsidy obligation. Even in the developed nations, where there is a scheme of crop insurance, there is a subsidy. Even in Japan, 50 per cent subsidy is given for this kind of insurance scheme. Here the proposal is for a crop insurance without any subsidy obligation. That is it should be self-financing without any subsidy application. That was the suggestion given by the so-called experts. So, I would like to request the Government that you should not implement this suggestion. It should be ensured that more facilities are given to our farmers. Irrigation facilities and input on agriculture has to be improved.

Then, I come to another issue, which is related to the oilseeds. In oilseed production, if you have gone through the oilseed production figures, you will find that there is a shortage of 40 per cent. We had self-sufficiency a decade ago. Then what happened? This new economic policy came. Then we were provided so many duty cuts for imports. Whatever we lost through these duties; we lost thousands of crores of rupees even if a portion of that, half of that, would have been given to the farmers of this country as subsidy, this country would have been self-sufficient in oilseeds production. We are importing 40 per cent, and we are spending crores and crores of foreign currency on imports. This is the situation with regard to oilseeds. This policy also should be changed by the Government

Then I come to the Public Distribution System. Sir, with regard to the Public Distribution System it was reported that we have nearly about half a million PDS shops. We have the experience of last one-and-a-half decades in this regard.

The TPDS was started during the NDA Government regime. What is the experience of this country? Has it helped this country to resolve any issue? That is the problem. We have the largest number of malnutrition cases – 51 per cent of the world. We have the largest number of starvation cases, whether it is in this State or that State, I do not know. About 22,000 people died because of starvation. Even the Supreme Court accused the previous Government saying "this Government is not capable to govern this country, because thousands and thousands of people are dying in the villages of this nation. Come with a concrete suggestion." That was the instruction given by the Supreme Court. How have we responded to that

suggestion or the direction given by the Court? Here, in this House, so many assurances were given. The previous Prime Minister himself had given an assurance in this House that he is going to evaluate as to what happened after the TPDS started? What is its impact on the poor people's life? How have these malnutrition deaths taken place? And, they will come with a concrete suggestion to resolve the issue. So far, I have not heard anything positive either from the previous Government or from this Government.

Sir, now I come to allotment and the intake. What happens to the offtake here? My esteemed colleague mentioned about the APL issue. If you go through the statistics which he gave from the Annual Report, you will find that, in the last year, the offtake from BPL was 74 per cent; the offtake from APL was only 13 per cent. Who are going to these shops? What is the APL price? The APL price is higher than the open market price. What was the intention? The intention was very clear. Keep an APL price which is higher than the open market price. Then, those needy will not go to the fair price shops. Then, there is a BPL price. That too is beyond the capacity of a poor man. Sir, if you see, you will find that BPL is at a higher rate. The issue price was increased. If you go through the employment situation in this country, you will find that there is a sharp fall in the rural employment. During the last Government regime, it was reported that merely 93 per cent of the country's workforce is employed in the informal sector, while the formal sector has only 7 per cent. The employment in the rural sector has been showing a declining trend since 90's, that is, since the liberalisation. The female workforce participation rate has declined relatively faster than their male counterparts, especially in the rural areas. My hon. sister mentioned about this situation. For the first time in the history of this country, the employment rate in the agriculture sector declined from 242.6 million persons in 1993-94 to 237.56 million in 1999-2000.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: While there was a population growth.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: yes. Then, similarly, Sir, the rural development expenditure has fallen from 14.5 per cent of GDP during 1985-90 to 8 per cent in early 1990s and further to 6 per cent of GDP on an average in the years following 1998, and in some years it has fallen below 5 per cent. This means, in real terms, "a reduction in rural development expenditure of about Rs. 3,000 crores annually on an average compared to pre-reform years" which in turn means a drop in incomes in agriculture to the tune of Rs. 20,000 crore to Rs. 35,000 crore. So, this

reflects the agrarian crisis in the villages—no employment, total unemployment. They are not getting even the prescribed minimum wage. Even in the Government sponsored employment generation programmes, they are not getting the prescribed minimum wage. So, their pocket is empty, even though the granary has plenty of foodgrains. This is the situation. So, because of the unemployment situation which is prevailing in the villages and because of the fall in the purchasing power of the poor man in the villages, they are not able to approach the PDS shops. And you have a price list which is beyond their capacity. So, something should be done. What is this discussion all about? Should we stop the APL? Is the APL enemy? No, it is not the enemy. Record is here, it is only 13 per cent. So, the reality is different. There is a conspiracy to dismantle the PDS. The TPDS was started by the BJP. They are against the PDS. I would like to know from this Government: Are you supporting this TPDS, or, are you going to revamp the system? Are you going to provide the minimum food for the needy people in the country? That is to be answered by this Government. Sir, I would like to mention about the malnutrition deaths. Sir, the hon. Minister is from Maharashtra. He is well aware of it. He knows much more than me as to what happened in two *taluks*, *Balni Taluk* in *Amaravati* district. Sir, thousands of children died because of malnutrition. During the last three years, nearly 10,000 children have died because of malnutrition.

Last month, there was a report from Madhya Pradesh. It was reported that nearly about 54 children died because of malnutrition in Madhya Pradesh. Sir, it was even reported that there were no foodgrain shops in thousands of villages, wherein these reports appeared almost daily in local newspapers that foodgrains allotted through the public distribution system were smuggled out to the neighbouring States and sold in the black market. That is happening. On the one side, there is a smuggling and, on the other side, there are no shops. In these rural villages where there are tribal hamlets, thousands of children are dying because of starvation. You just go there and enquire about it from each house. They may say, "They are all APL". I am talking about these poor tribals in the 'hilly areas' of Maharashtra. I visited nearly about twenty-five villages. I put the same question. They all told me that they are all 'APL'. Who is going to take care of the poor man who is dying because of starvation in the villages? Who is taking strict action against those who are diverting these foodgrains which are meant for the poor people? Who is going to take positive action against the blackmarketeters who are misusing these foodgrains meant

for the poor? Something should be done. This Government has to prove that they are going to do something for them. You go through this Report from Madhya Pradesh. Please do something positively for the poor man. So, Sir, this is the situation.

Sir, here the system has totally failed. We were not able to provide any assistance to the poor man in the villages. ...(*Time-bell*)... Sir, there is one more issue with regard to the granary which was overflowing some four-five years ago. But, suddenly, all the stocks vanished from the FCI godowns within three months. At one time, nearly about 65 million tonnes of foodgrains were there in the FCI godowns. Suddenly, it disappeared. ...(*interruptions*)... Sir, it was reported that during the period of the NDA Government from November, 2002 to January, 2003, some export had taken place. With regard to that report. It was reported—I don't know exactly—that a subsidy was given, where traders presented false bills or used other devices to benefit from export subsidies worth of nearly \$ 1.5 billion. It was reported like this. So, there were kickbacks, there was some misuse, and they provided some false evidences and took money from the Government Exchequer. That is what has been reported. I am not able to understand how is it possible that a large quantity of foodgrains disappeared from the granary during this short period? We have to look into it. Similarly, in accounting also, there was some problem. There was a missing stock of nearly about 13 million tonnes of foodgrains during this period. In accounting, there was some problem. Actually, it has been shown as 22 million tonnes, whereas it should be 35 million tonnes. The question is, where did the 13 million tonnes go, which are not accounted for? Did it rot, was it destroyed, or, were the exports more than they actually stated? Sir, 13 million tonnes is a huge figure, and if it had been used for the Food-for-Work Programme, it could have provided employment to a large number of people. So, Sir, it is an allegation. It was reported in the newspapers. There are ill-feelings in the public as to how such a huge quantity of foodgrains had disappeared from the granaries. Why did this accounting problem come? Why did false bills come and how the money had been given? All these issues need to be discussed properly. A proper investigation is needed in this regard. I urge upon the Minister to kindly look into these issues. Sir, finally, with regard to policies, I would like to tell this Government, that they must change the policies; they should not pursue the same policies as those of the NDA. The people of this country discarded the NDA Government for its anti-people policies and voted them out. I would like to remind the UPA Government of the spirit of the verdict of the



people, and want the present regime to desist from pursuing the same economic policies that were followed by the NDA. If they don't, their fate would be the same as that of the NDA. I do not want this Government to meet with the same fate. This Government should continue. This Minister must continue in office. But, this Government must change its policies on food, food security, public distribution system and subsidies. Universal PDS should be restarted in this country and the Government must ensure that there are no starvation deaths in the villages of this country.

DR. K. MALAISAMY (Tamil Nadu): Thank you Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, it is a privilege to speak on a subject about which not only everyone on the earth is concerned, but directly involved as a consumer. For that matter, even the producer, or, the service-provider of a product today, would be a consumer tomorrow, as a consumer of some other products. Thus everyone under the sky is a consumer.

Sir, the concept of consumerism is age-old, time-honoured, and dates back to 1824, as propounded by an American Advocate. But it had a positive growth and meaningful development only during the time of John F. Kennedy, when he was the President of USA in 1962. It was only during his time that a legal sanction was given by passing a Bill, envisaging four rights, namely, right to information, right to safety, right to be heard, and right to choose. These were the four rights that were initially envisaged. Subsequently, several rights were added.

Sir, as far as India is concerned, the concept and the movement were not at all popular in spite of the fact that there were several legislations and laws to protect the interests and rights of the consumer. In this connection, I would cite certain laws, such as the Law of Contracts, the Sale of Goods Act, IPC, the Essential Commodities Act, the Drug Control Act, and so on. These are some of the Acts, which are, no doubt, protecting the rights of the consumer. But they are all punitive and preventive. On the other hand, a boom has occurred in India only after the passage of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, which encompasses several nice features.

Sir, as you are well aware, the Consumer Protection Act is really a boon to the consumer. It is a unique and progressive legislation aimed at social welfare. Not only that, unlike other laws which are punitive and preventive, as I said earlier, it is curative and compensatory. This is a special feature of the Act.

Sir, according to statistical data and survey, it is found that no parallel legislation outside the country is equivalent to the Consumer Protection

Act. The Consumer Protection Act has another special feature. That is, it goes with all goods and services. Not only that, it touches upon all sectors, whether private, public, or cooperative. In other words, it has got several features including the adjudication process that is simple, speedy and inexpensive. Sir, ultimately, the object of consumerism is to protect and promote the interests and rights of consumers. It is not only to protect consumers from exploitation of others, but should also enable consumers to get the three 'Rs.', which are Redressal, Restitution, and Remedy.

Sir, with this background, let me come to the Department and the Ministry of the hon. Minister. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution System has got two Departments, namely, Consumer Affairs on the one side, and Food and Public Distribution Systems on the other side. It has got its own assignment, objectives and functions. The paramount responsibility of the Department of Consumer Affairs is to monitor the prices of foodgrains. As many as 14 items are being monitored by this Department. They have to monitor the price daily, and then they have to monitor weekly the whole sale price of these commodities. This is on the one side. Then, it has to protect the interests and the rights of consumers. These are the basic objectives of the Consumer Affairs Department.

Then, I come to the most important wing of the Ministry, namely, the Food and Public Distribution System. The Department has been doing very, very important work. There is no doubt about it. Coming to the Food and the Public Distribution System, their objective is to evolve or formulate the policies in terms of procurement, movement, storage, distribution, import, export and maintenance of buffer stock. They have not only to ensure the availability of foodgrains at affordable price, particularly to the vulnerable segments of the society, that is, the poor, but also they have to ensure the remunerative price for farmers. Lastly, the Department also deals with sugar and edible oil including their production, quality and distribution.

Sir, coming to the function, in short, they are doing a very massive gigantic physical operations, which cannot be compared by any other Department not only in India, but also in the world. Their network is such that they are doing a massive operation of procurement. Procurement is done by the Central Government through FCI and the State Governments. The procured foodgrains are pooled at the Central pool, and then it is being distributed to States so that foodgrains can be distributed and reached to

the poor, or whomsoever, through their PDS. Sir, we are told that there are as many as 4.62 lakh retail outlets in the country to cover about 160 million BPL families. Then, they have to deal with around Rs. 30,000 crore worth of products per year by way of Public Distribution. So, what I am trying to say is that it is a very gigantic operation in which they are involved. They are also touching the most important segment of the society.

After having seen their operation and after having seen their highlights, it is my duty now to see whether everything is okay there and whether there are some grey areas or not. Sir, in any system, we always used to have a SWOT analysis *i.e.* to see what is the strength, what is the weakness, what is the opportunity and what is the threat. We are concerned to know our weakness rather than strong points. This is a better way to solve the problems. Sir, coming to the grey areas, I may mention this with due respect to our BPL lady Member from Karnataka. She was making an impression to the Chair and others that everything goes well and there are no starvation deaths, etc. As the Chair and the entire House know well, the availability of foodgrains in India is not at all a problem. For the last one decade, the production is going up; the foodgrains production is going up. We are even going to the extent of exporting our foodgrains to other countries. That is the reality of the situation. Now, for her and others, I would like to submit some statistical data. Fifty million starvation deaths are there. Then, 200 million people are underfed. Then, 60 million tonnes of foodgrains are rotting in our godowns. What I am trying to say is that production is there, the availability is there, large quantities are stored in godowns, but it does not reach where it should reach with the result starvation deaths are there. People do die out of hunger. That is the reality...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy, the debate is going on smoothly.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, what is wrong? Availability is there, but accessibility is not there. That is the point I want to make. There is something basically wrong. What is that basic thing which is wrong? This is the point that our hon. Minister must be concerned. Is there a system failure or a human failure? What exactly is the failure? Why it did not reach the people? This is the point I want to stress upon. Then, Finance Minister's Budget speech says, "The greatest happiness of the greatest number." Shri Jairam Ramesh will be happy to hear that. Where is the greatest happiness of the greatest number? Thirty-six per cent of the total

population is below the poverty line. Are they getting what is their due share? It is not at all happening. In this connection, I want to ask whether your policy of National Food Security Scheme, is a success in a situation like this, where availability is there, but accessibility is not there. That is my first point. Then, coming to the second point, as I said, 36 per cent of the people are below poverty line. Even when you supply the food at subsidised rates, the people cannot buy that. Why? They don't have the purchasing power for which you and I may not be directly responsible, but the ground reality is that the purchasing power is not there.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA) in the Chair]

Thirdly, similar is the situation in the case of 80 per cent of the...

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): Sir, I would like to know whether he is sure about the data regarding percentage of population below poverty line. I think, it is 26 per cent of total population, and not 36 per cent.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA) Mr. Malaisamy, have you heard him?

DR. K. MALAISAMY. No, Sir, I have not heard him.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): He wants to know what is the percentage of people below poverty line. Do you have that number?

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Thirty-Six per cent of the total population is below poverty line. This is the statistical data... (*Interruptions*). No, it is a matter of record.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: If the Member says it is 36 per cent, let it be on record.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: It is not a correct figure.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: If you are able to produce something ...(*Interruptions*). I have carved out something from some of the records. If you can prove that you are right, I stand corrected ...(*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): I don't know, if everybody has a question. Please, listen to him. He is not a Minister so

far ...*(Interruptions)*. Please, sit down. Let the Minister reply. Let him say that the entire country is below poverty line. What is the problem?

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: It is the percentage of rural BPL household according to the Census report.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): Mr. Raghavan, let him say that you and I are also below poverty line.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: This is a Census report.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): It is all right. But, you can't question him. Let him say whatever he wants to say Mr. Malaisamy, you have to finish now. Your time is over. That is the only problem.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, I never take the Chair's time and others' time.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): No, your time is over. How much more time you need to conclude?

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, give me another five to ten minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): Five to ten minutes! Listen, you had 11 minutes and you have already taken 14 minutes.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: When the Deputy Chairman was here, he was very liberal, but you are very strict.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): That is why he has sent me here because you don't listen to him. Please take another 2-3 minutes and finish it.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Okay, Sir, I will try to finish it quickly. Sir, another aspect is the Public Distribution system (PDS). Sir, in PDS, we don't deal with coarse gains at all. We mainly deal with wheat and rice. We procure wheat and rice and distribute whereas the poor people, the people below the poverty line mostly need only the coarse gains, which are not being supplied. Our hon. Lady Members from Karnataka also said that there was rampant corruption, pilferage, black-marketing in the PDS. Sir, according to the statistical data, nearly 67 per cent of the products are stolen, and, fifty per cent did not reach the people below the poverty line at all. Sir, this is the information, which I culled out from some of the records that they have given, not from elsewhere.

Sir, I will make some special recommendations to the Minister for meriting his consideration. First is that the PDS coverage which covers 6.5 crore families below the poverty line whereas the States have identified 8.7 crore families below the poverty line. Now, the coverage has to be enlarged. This is the point of the States whereas the Ministry is not willing to do. The Government is not liberal enough to extend the coverage. With the result, what may happen is that the scale of issue to reach the BPL will be slowly reduced. This is going to happen. Sir, unless the coverage is extended to 8.7 crore BPL families, it will cause other connected problems. This is my second point.

Sir, another point is regarding FCI, and, it is on record that 65 per cent of the utilisation capacity is from hired godowns whereas only 37 per cent of the FCI capacity is used. In other words, FCI is using 37 per cent of its capacity while they are hiring about 65 per cent. What is it? It does not need any elaboration. How could it happen? The Minister has to see as to how the hiring should be redone and effective utilisation of the FCI capacity should be done.

My next point is the proxy-labour racket in the FCI. There is a big racket and it has been appearing in the newspapers. Without actually working, it is shown as working labour; it is a big racket. I would like to know as to what are you going to do on that. Sir, another point is regarding the irregularities in the open market sale and exports of foodgrains by the FCI. When they want to sell, for certain reasons, in the open market, and, they want to export some of the commodities, lot of irregularities take place. Again, it appeared in the papers and it is a matter of record. Please tell us as to what you are going to do with regard to this problem.

Now, I come to a very important point, which is non-identification of the BPL families by some States, I mean, not Tamil Nadu. Comparatively, Tamil Nadu has been considered to be very good in the Public Distribution System. There may be some minor lapses here and there but, by and large, it has been doing well. Identification of BPL families by certain States should be done as quickly as possible. Sir, another aspect is clearing the sugarcane price arrears. You know that the farmers, the sugarcane growers have not been paid because there was no money in the mills. The State Government was given assistance by the Central Government, with the result the sugarcane growers were paid the arrears. Now, that scheme has been stopped. They say that

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the State can go for open market borrowings. Everyone knows that getting outside borrowing through so many means is very much difficult for the States. So, my point is whether the scheme can be restored, revived. My next point, is, Sir, regarding training and research aspect in PDS. The total money allotted is Rs. 30 lakhs for the entire country. It is a very paltry sum. Around 4.62 lakh outlets are there, for training and for other purposes they have set up only Rs. 30 lakhs. As far as edible oils are concerned, our PDS system does not take any responsibility. We do not store anything. On the other hand, it is available in the open market. Okay. So long as the availability in the market is ensured, there is no problem. What I am trying to tell the hon. Minister is that availability in the market should be ensured. Coming to the last few points, Sir, I will rush through, I have been sitting with you in the Industry Committee. You have been asking every public undertaking whether professionalisation has been done, whether that principle or the policy has been well-evolved. You have been critically reviewing such public enterprises. Now, I would like to ask the hon. Minister for Agriculture whether professionalisation has been insisted or promoted in the public undertakings like the FCI or the Central Warehousing Corporation or Hindustan Vegetable Corporation for better performance. Sir, lastly, under this head, a huge quantity of 70,000 metric tonnes of wheat and 10,000 metric tonnes of rice has been given to the World Food Programme under BPL rates. Sir, 70,000 tons and 10,000 tons of wheat and rice have been given at BPL rates under the World Food Programme. I don't know why so much quantity was given under this Programme. What was the concern to give such a huge quantity? Whether we can afford to wriggle out of this. This is the point the Minister may consider. Finally, Sir, in the light of the past experience, in the light of the present trend and in the light of the future challenges, it is up to the hon. Minister to have a re-look at the entire set up, in the sense, objective-wise, organisation-wise, operation-wise and manpower-wise, whether it needs a revisions, and a rethinking in such a situation. He must work on that. He must also see whether the legislation available is enough, or, he needs a revamp of the legislation. He must also ensure efficiency, effectiveness, ethics, economy, empowerment, transparency, accountability, rationality, impartiality and participation so that the entire system can be efficient, and the entire system can perform better. Thank you, Sir.

**DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY ( Andhra Pradesh):** Sir, we have very different situations prevailing in our country. Sometimes, we have drought in some States and in some States there is no drought; surplus foodgrains

are there. But, at the same time, those foodgrains cannot be taken to other States due to the States rules. In our country, every year we have been suffering either by drought or how to have the most efficient system in the distribution system. For instance, in 2004, in our country, out of 524 districts, we had a very, very severe drought in 276 districts. So, the year 2004 was a very bad year in our country because we had a shortage of food production in the nation. In spite of the Government making its best efforts to have the best mechanisation to see that warehouse are built to store foodgrains so that if there is an emergency situation in a particular State, that State can be provided foodgrains-- they have been planning it very systematically-- still people are suffering. What happens is, in one part of the country, there is shortage of foodgrains and in other part of the country there is surplus production. If there is surplus production, the prices fall down and the farmers suffer. This is the problem.

My second point is, India has got the largest Public Distribution System in the world. As my colleague just now said, commodities worth Rs. 30,000 crores are being distributed through 462 lakh Fair Price Shops every year. But still a lot of pilferage is taking place and a lot of corruption is taking place and justice is not being done to the people under the Public Distribution System. These things are going on. In spite of having the largest Public Distribution System, the Government must make more efforts to tighten the system in order to see that the common man is not put to any inconvenience and justice is done to all the people.

Sir, the hon. Member has also said that there were no hunger deaths. It is not true. There is a survey report which has pointed out that more than 24,000 people die of hunger every day and nearly 78 per cent of them are women and children. These are authentic figures. It is a very sad thing. What are the schemes that have been prepared to meet this situation and to reduce the number of deaths due to hunger in India?

I would also like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government proposes to provide food-for-work-programme to a number of States during the current year. We know that food-for-work-programme is going on in some States. What is the progress in this regard? I would also like to know as to how many States are really in a position to implement this scheme.

Sir, nearly Rs. 2,500 crores, including 16 lakh tonnes of foodgrains would immediately be required to meet the drought threat in nine States. Now



the Government has decided to meet this situation through the National Calamity and Contingency Fund. The States have been asked to prepare a status report on the fallout of the deficit rain, including the rainfall and the crop situation. The concerned Union Ministries were also directed to prepare State-wise status reports on drought related issues for the information of the Prime Minister. I would like to know whether the State Governments were directed to take steps to ensure that there are no cases of starvation and malnutrition. If so, what are the concrete steps taken in this regard?

As I have already pointed out, there are some States where we have surplus foodgrains and there are some other States which are suffering from drought. What mechanism is the Government going to evolve to meet this situation? As on today, the deficit States are not allowed to buy foodgrains directly from the surplus States. I would request the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government to allow the deficient States to buy foodgrains from surplus States directly. I do not know whether this system is there or not. I have been informed that due to day-to-day practical problems, it is not allowed. Even though warehouses are there and foodgrains are stored there, but whenever there is shortage of foodgrains in some States, the people suffer there. In those States where there is surplus production, the prices fall down and because of that the farmers are forced to commit suicides.

How is the Minister going to evolve a perfect mechanism to see that such things do not happen? Also, we must know that the State Food Ministers have agreed to undertake procurement and distribution of foodgrains through Designated Agencies and Co-operatives, as the Central Government has agreed to render a package of incentives. This package of incentives was proposed at the Conference of State Food Secretaries held on 17th May, 2004. We must recall that the Conference of Food Ministers, which was held subsequently in 2004, adopted all the 13 Resolutions passed earlier at the Conference of Food Secretaries. I would like to know whether we are getting any benefit out of this. At what stage is it now? Has this Conference helped in solving the problems to some extent at least?

Sir, the next important thing is distribution system. Even though the Government is making all efforts to see to it that it is properly made, now, when we take the case of the people below-the-poverty line, the Evaluation Committee of the Planning Commission has actually found that almost 50 per cent of the production, that is, Rs. 4,324 crores worth of foodgrains, do

not properly reach the BPL families. They made a lot of surveys; visited several places, and they found that pilferage alone accounts for 50 per cent, and a lot of injustice is being done to these poor people. I would bring this to the notice of the hon. Minister. Of course, our Minister is a dynamic person. He is competent enough to run this Ministry. He is a great asset to us. He must clearly inform us as to what efforts he is going to make to help these people. Under his dynamism, how is he going to put the entire system in place?

Another most important thing is, we have to ensure equity in distribution of foodgrains to various States depending on each State's necessity, the monsoon factor and the availability of surplus and deficiency irrespective States, and thus control the distribution system effectively. Here comes the question of sugar. It is a part of the Food Ministry. Sugar is not a mere commodity, but this is interlinked with sugarcane growers. In States like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Tamil Nadu, millions of farmers depend on sugarcane cultivation. But in the last few years, a number of sugar factories have been closed down. When sugar factories are closed down, automatically, the farmers are in distress as they do not get their payments. Then they divert to other products, which again gives them a lot of problems. Now, why do they face this problem? Why are they suffering today? What steps are we going to take in future to help these growers? Here, I would like to mention that the previous Government was erratically importing too many stocks of sugar and India was flooded not with domestic production but with excess imports because of wrong policies. As a result, the sugar prices fell down and the sugar factories had to be forcefully closed down. Also, the co-operatives were in trouble with the result that the sugarcane growers were put in great distress and sufferings. But, now, the present Government, the UPA Government, is very carefully observing the situation. Imports have been stopped. Last year, the production was to the extent of 200 lakh tonnes of sugar. This year, the production is going to be to the tune of 125 lakh tonnes. It has considerably come down mainly because of monsoon failure. So, till recently, the problem had been overstocking. Now, the stage has come when the stock is going to be reduced. But if we import sugar, again, the prices will crash and the sugarcane growers will be affected. And, if we do not produce more sugarcane, the sugar factories cannot function smoothly and the whole system will be disturbed. So, what is the option? I would say that more and more sugar factories should come up. More and more sugar should be produced. Let us not depend on imports.

If you have more sugar factories, even if monsoon fails in one part of the country, sugar production will not be affected. We find from our experience that if we depend only on sugar production, no sugar factory will be able to survive in the near future because technology is changing. One can see this happening in countries like Brazil, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, the United States of America, China and so on. All these countries are having systemic changes now. So, we must have, along with sugar production, Co-generation and ethanol. These things must be produced. Ethanol is a by-product of sugar. Five per cent of ethanol must be compulsorily used in petroleum products. Therefore, a sugar factory which manufactures sugar, with ethanol and co-generation, will be able to become self-sufficient. More sugar factories will come up and more sugar will be produced. Sugar factories will also become more viable. So far as textile industry is concerned, the Government has brought forward a very good policy of giving relief so as to make the textile industry more successful in the long run; and, the future is going to be very glorious for the textile industry. So, I call upon the Ministry to evolve a new system and a new policy so that ethanol is compulsorily used in petroleum products to the extent of five per cent. I am told that the Ministry has recently started doing it, but it is still not being done with full steam. Also so far as co-generation is concerned, as on today, 10 per cent non-conventional energy is compulsorily to be bought by all the State Governments and all the State Electricity Boards. But that is not sufficient. I call upon the Minister, though it is not his subject, to make a uniform policy in this regard. There should be a uniform policy that all the State Governments should compulsorily utilise 10 per cent non-conventional energy. If it were increased to more than ten per cent, it would be much better. Otherwise, at least, ten per cent should be compulsory utilised.

Secondly, the PP agreement rates should be uniform in all the States. In some States it is very less. In some States it is very high. It is very important for sugar industry. I call upon the Ministry to see to it that a new comprehensive policy is brought forward so that ethanol compulsorily becomes a part of the sugar-manufacturing industry and there is also co-generation. Even though we are going to produce 1,25,000 tonnes this year, we should plan in such a way that next year we must get two lakh tonnes. So, I request the Minister to reply as to how he is planning it. Sir, sugar pricing is a very tough job. He has succeeded in not getting the sugar prices jacked up. He has given a warning to the sugar industry that if they jacked up prices, he would be forced to import sugar, and there

would be a crash of sugar prices in the market. I am, therefore, very happy to see that the Ministry is trying to see that the prices do not go up. The prices should be controlled in a very rational way. At the same time, we should also see to it that the sugar industry survives.

Once again, I am happy to inform that our Government has a very well-planned and effective PDS as well as storage system so far as foodgrains and oilseeds are concerned. I would like to say one thing. We must discourage import of oil and oilseeds. We must concentrate on producing more oilseeds in our own country and discourage import of oil and oilseeds. This must be taken up as a challenge. I request that a comprehensive policy must be brought forward so as to strengthen the sugar industry and the food industry.

DR. BIMAL JALAN (Nominated) : Thank you, Sir, I would just like to make a couple of points which may be of some relevance to the whole debate on Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. Firstly, the issues that are being raised about poverty and food distribution are part of a larger problem which is the growth rate in agriculture. Most economists, including the Planning Commission in its Mid-term Survey have studied this whole thing. There is a watershed in our agricultural areas. If you take 1996-97, for nearly ten years, there is a secular decline in the rate of growth in agriculture. It is about 1.5 per cent, I believe, on an average. It is not cyclical; it does not depend on monsoon. But, it is a reflection of a lot of other factors, particularly, institutional support as well as the decline in the availability of public irrigation. So, the reason why I am mentioning this is that the preponderant part of India's population is dependent on agriculture. Now, you have a rate of growth in agriculture, since 1996-97, of 1.5 per cent as, say, 3 per cent or 3.5 per cent before that, it is a part of a much larger secular issue which requires, I think, consideration and action by other Ministries also. If you talk about Food and Public Distribution, you can't think of it in an isolated way. Similarly, poverty, you can't think of it in an isolated way. These are structural issues that we are following, it requires pondering. So, this is the first point that I want to make. It is a part of a much larger structural problem.

Now, when we think about poverty, a large majority of India's population is dependent on agriculture. If the rate of growth in agriculture is less than the rate of growth of population, then, obviously, you would see that the poverty cannot be eradicated as fast as we had hoped. This is an issue, which, I am sure, would require consideration in both the Mid-term Review

as well as in the next Five Year Plan. So, the agricultural aspect and all related institutional support, modalities, policies, etc., are a part of this particular problem that we are talking about.

Sir, now I came to the Public Distribution System. Sir, again the recent Planning Commission's Report, with which, I am sure, everybody is familiar with, has pointed out that there is very, very large diversion of grain from the BPL families or the subsidised rates to other areas. Now, this is also not a new thing. All the studies which have been done in this area for the last 10—15 years have shown, percentages may vary, but again this is a secular problem, of substantial diversion of grain. And, this is not a reflection of this Government or that Government or this inspector or that inspector or this Panchayat or this district or that district. I believe, again, the problem is much more fundamental. The problem to my mind is, --- here, I am sure, again, there is no agreement on this on the political side--if you have the same shop supplying grain at four different prices, depending on the classification of the person, you are going to get diversion. Now, the present Minister and his Department had made an excellent presentation. He had a meeting of all the Members of Parliament and there was a very, very good discussion. The presentation was very good. And I think the problems are galore, that if you have a Public Distribution System where the same fair price shop is giving grain, at least, in my view, at four different prices, depending on who the person is, you are going to get diversion. So, we need to do some thinking on this. I have written to the hon. Minister also, making some suggestions in this area, this is what has now become the famous word 'out of box thinking', that if you think along the same lines, and if you keep on saying that you are going to do it better, than what I am doing it now, have more inspectors, more decentralisation, more this or more that, more FCI, less of something, you will not get over this problem. So, my suggestion to the hon. Minister is, I am sure, again, there will be opposition that this cannot be done and that can not be done, is this. We have, I think, about 100 districts in our country where the preponderant part of the population is below poverty line, it may be 60 per cent or 65 per cent. I am suggesting to the hon. Minister that on an experimental basis, you select a handful of districts, may be 15, 20, 25, 50 and supply grain to everybody at what you now call the BPL price, that you have one price of public distribution which can be the BPL price. If you do it, then, at least, 60 per cent or 70 per cent of the BPL people would benefit because there will be no incentive for diversion, because the APL people would also have access to it. Normally, the APL

people would not buy grain from the ration shops to the same extent that they are buying now. My first suggestion is that we need to do a new thinking. I am suggesting this because there can be a lot of opposition, how can we discontinue, this country has been like this, we must have four prices, how can we have the same price for the BPL? I am saying, for the BPL, you have the same price. But make it available to everybody in the worst districts. Take tribal districts, take North-Eastern India, take the districts where the percentage of below povertyline is, say 60 per cent, 70 per cent, 75 per cent. Take anything. Have one price and see if it works. I can tell you, the subsidy would decline, the diversion would be reduced. This is my hypothesis. Unless proven wrong, I am not withdrawing. This is one suggestion.

The second is, what do you do about those districts where the BPL families are not that big. The subsidy may increase. What I am suggesting there is, we should experiment with the voucher system for the BPL families in those States. That is, in those selected districts, again, take a handful of districts try it out, experiment with it. For all the BPL families, you give him the difference between the APL and the BPL as vouchers. These vouchers, they can use partly as cash and partly as vouchers. Again, there would be objection, "That the vouchers may be sold" If vouchers are sold, they would get the money. If you want to improve administration, if you want to improve availability of grain to the BPL, to the poverty stricken families, we have to think a new. Because, this is not a new problem. This is an old problem. The problem is of our own making and I think, we can find a solution if we try and do something new. Therefore, I would suggest to the Minister, at least have it examined; no great harm would come if for the next couple of years we experiment with a new system in a few districts and see what happens. Now I just wanted to make this point. I am just leaving because there are no immediate solutions.

Sir, when there was a Green Revolution, on the whole Green Revolution debate, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan made a very important point ---policy is important. You also need a synergy between the policy, between the policy-maker and the implementer. You have to have right policy, right policy-maker and right implementer. I believe, Sir, the present Minister, I find is the right implementer. I am a great admirer of him; he is the right man at the right place. What we now need is the right policy.

Sir, I would expect and request him to find a policy which is different and not only more of the same. Thank you very much.

श्री राजीव शुक्ल (उत्तर प्रदेश): धन्यवाद, उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय। मैं सबसे पहले तो माननीय मंत्री जी को और सरकार को इस बात के लिए बधाई देना चाहूंगा कि छुटपुट वर्षा के बावजूद, irregular मानसून के बावजूद आवश्यक वस्तुओं, खाद्यान्नों और कृषि उपजों के मूल्य उन्होंने नियंत्रण में रखे और इन्हें देश को उपलब्ध कराने में एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका अदा की।

मान्यवर, कुछ ऐसे मुद्दे हैं जिन्हें देश की जनता के हित में मैं सदन में रखना चाहता हूँ। मान्यवर, सरकार हर साल 20 हजार करोड़ का खाद्यान्न खरीदती है, जिसमें से 16 से 17 हजार करोड़ के बीच में खाद्यान्न पंजाब, हरियाणा और पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश अर्थात् इन ढाई या सवा दो राज्यों से खरीदा जाता है। मैं इन प्रदेशों के किसानों को बधाई देना चाहूंगा जिन्होंने देश की food security में एक अहम रोल अदा किया है, देश की खाद्यान्न समस्या को सुलझाने में अहम भूमिका अदा की है, लेकिन मेरा माननीय मंत्री जी से अनुरोध है कि उन्हें इसे decentralised करना चाहिए। आप देखें 17 हजार करोड़ में सिर्फ ढाई राज्य और बाकी तीन हजार करोड़ में पूरा देश? मान्यवर, बिहार से तो शायद procurement में एक दाना भी नहीं खरीदा जाता?

श्री शरद पवार: इस साल से शुरूआत हुई है।

श्री राजीव शुक्ल: मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि चाहे दक्षिण के राज्य हों, पश्चिम के राज्य हों या पूर्व के राज्य हों - सभी में इस decentralised करना चाहिए और देश के सब जगह के किसानों को इसका फायदा होना चाहिए। मान्यवर, जब हरियाणा से, पंजाब से आप तमिलनाडु को गेहूँ भेजते हैं, तो ट्रांसपोर्टेशन कॉस्ट कितना आता है? अगर मैं आपको बताऊँ, 140 रुपए प्रति क्विंटल, इतना तो सिर्फ यातायात का शुल्क आता है। कीमतों पर इसका क्या असर पड़ता है? यदि वहीं के किसानों को आप धन देकर, उनको प्रोत्साहन दें, तो वहीं का सामान, वहीं के लोगों को, वहीं का अनाज और सस्ता मिलेगा और उनको वह वेरायटी मिलेगी जो लोकल वेरायटी उनको पसन्द आएगी। हो सकता है कि हरियाणा की वेरायटी उन्हें उतनी अच्छी न लगती हो। हरियाणा को हरियाणा वाली चाहिए। पश्चिम उत्तर प्रदेश के लोगों को हरियाणा की वेरायटी चाहिए। इससे आप पूरे देश में विकेन्द्रीकरण की एक ऐसी व्यवस्था कर सकते हैं कि जिससे लोगों को उसका जबर्दस्त फायदा मिल सकता है और मैं कहता हूँ कि अगर आपको एक्सपोर्ट करना है तो पाकिस्तान को पंजाब से एक्सपोर्ट कर दीजिए। अभी तक के जो आँकड़े बताते हैं, पाकिस्तान को 10 मिलियन टन गेहूँ की हर साल जरूरत पड़ती है। आप ट्रक के जरिए बाघा बॉर्डर से एक्सपोर्ट कर दीजिए। न कोई कॉस्ट आएगी, न लागत आएगी। वहाँ पर बहुत सस्ते में चला जाएगा और एक्सपोर्ट भी देश का बढ़ेगा, अगर उनको जरूरत है। दूसरी चीज, एक्सपोर्ट मार्केटिंग पर, मुझे मंत्री जी को कहना है कि हमें कंटैन्ट्री मेनटेन करनी चाहिए। यह नहीं कि हमने एक साल एक्सपोर्ट किया, फिर दो साल बैठ गए, तीसरे साल फिर एक्सपोर्ट करने लगे, फिर बैठ गए, जैसा कि चल रहा है। आज हमारे पास गेहूँ की कमी है, लेकिन चावल है। अगर चावल सरप्लस में है तो आप चावल को एक्सपोर्ट करिए। अगर हम इन्टरनेशनल फूड मार्केट में एक रेगुलर एक्सपोर्टर रहेंगे, तो हमारा एक रोब-दाब बना

रहेगा। हमारी एक क्रेडिबिलिटी बनी रहेगी। वहाँ हमारी एक साख रहेगी, लेकिन अगर हम एक साल करते हैं, दूसरे साल नहीं करते हैं, तो उसका बहुत गलत असर जाता है हमें इस मामले पर निश्चित रूप से ध्यान देना चाहिए। जैसे बासमती चावल है, आज पाकिस्तान हमसे आगे निकलने की कोशिश कर रहा है, लेकिन हमें अपने बासमती को यूरोप में एक्सपोर्ट करके वहाँ पर इसका मार्केट सुदृढ़ रखना चाहिए, इस तरफ ध्यान देना चाहिए। मान्यवर उपसभापति जी, मैं तो यह समझता हूँ कि सबसे बड़ी चुनौती अगर फूड एण्ड सिविल सप्लायज डिपार्टमेंट की, उसके मिनिस्टर की कोई होती है, तो वह है गरीब को उसके लिए आवंटित अनाज पहुँच जाए और यह इस देश में सबसे बड़ा रैकेट है। मैं खास तौर से उत्तर से भारत के राज्यों पर यह खुला आरोप लगाना चाहूँगा कि उत्तर भारत के राज्यों में अन्त्योदय योजना के अंतर्गत, बी० पी० एल० योजना के तहत दो करोड़ लोगों को जो 24 हजार करोड़ का खाद्यान्न जाता है, शायद ही उन गरीबों को मिल पाता है। उत्तर प्रदेश में तो अभी एक बहुत बड़ा घोटाला पकड़ में आया है कि वहाँ पर गरीबों को अनाज नहीं पहुँचा। दो रुपए प्रति किलो के हिसाब से गेहूँ दिया जाता है और तीन रुपए प्रति किलो के हिसाब से चावल दिया जाता है, लेकिन बाजार में बिक जाता है, वहाँ पर पहुँचता ही नहीं है, कार्ड तक नहीं बचे हैं। यह इस मंत्रालय की सबसे बड़ी चुनौती है कि वह कोशिश करे कि पिछले सालों में जो गड़बड़ी हुई, एन० डी० ए० की सरकार के जमाने में जो गड़बड़ी हुई है, उसको यह सरकार दुरुस्त करे और ऐसे लोगों को बेनकाब करे और पकड़े, गरीबों के कार्ड बनें जो बी० पी० एल० और अन्त्योदय योजना के अंतर्गत हैं और अनाज सही आदमी को, गरीब आदमी को पहुँचे, यह एक बहुत बड़ी जिम्मेदारी है। मेरा मंत्री जी से अनुरोध है कि वे इस तरफ निश्चित रूप से ध्यान देंगे। अब एक चौथी समस्या है, जिसके मामले में मुझे लगता है कि पूरे सदन में सहमति होनी चाहिए कि अगर भ्रष्टाचार की कोई गंगोत्री है, तो फूड कॉर्पोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया, एफ० सी० आई० है। आप इसके बारे में पूरे देश में रेफरेंडम करा लीजिए, हर आदमी यही बोलेगा। इसको पिछले 50 साल से ठीक नहीं किया जा सका। कोई ले आइए, कहीं ले आइए, मंत्री बेचारा क्या करेगा, चेयरमैन क्या करेगा, एम० डी० क्या करेगा? नीचे का आवा-का-आवा ही खराब है। खरीदने में तो भ्रष्टाचार, बेचने में तो भ्रष्टाचार, तौलने में तो भ्रष्टाचार, स्टोर करने में भ्रष्टाचार, हर चीज में उसमें पैसे की लूट है। मेरे ख्याल से सरकार को इस मामले को बहुत गंभीरता से लेना चाहिए। अब यह मौका है कि यू० पी० ए० की सरकार इस लूट को बंद करे, एफ० सी० आई० के लोगों के प्रति सख्ती करे, उन लोगों के ऊपर जरूरत से ज्यादा, जितनी सख्ती की जा सके, की जानी चाहिए। मिनिमम डैमेज होना चाहिए। अक्सर यह होता है कि खाद्यान्न खराब हो जाता है और उसको फिर सस्ते में बेच दिया जाता है, उसका भी बहुत बड़ा रैकेट है। पिछली बार एक अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कंपनी ने इस तरह का काफी माल उठाया था और वह एक अलग घोटाला है, इसको मैं अभी नहीं लेना चाहूँगा, लेकिन मैं मंत्री जी को इससे निश्चित रूप से अवगत कराऊँगा। हैंडलिंग स्टाफ की जिम्मेदारी फिक्स की जानी चाहिए। अगर वह खाद्यान्न खराब होता है, जब तक आप उसकी डायरेक्ट रेसपांसिबिलिटी फिक्स नहीं करेंगे, तब तक कुछ नहीं होने वाला है और एक्सेस स्टॉक का डिस्पोजल होना चाहिए। मुझे याद है



कि नीतीश कुमार जी जब होते थे, तो मुझसे उन्होंने कहा था कि साहब, इतना अनाज सड़ गया है कि अब मैं सोचता हूँ कि उसे समन्दर में फिंकवा दूँ। वरना एपीडेमिक फैल जाएगा, बीमारी फैल जाएगी। अब भारत जैसे देश में अगर अनाज को समुद्र में फिकवाना पड़े, तो इससे ज्यादा शर्म की कोई बात नहीं हो सकती। इस बारे में सरकार को एफ॰सी॰आई॰ के तहत सारे इंतजाम करने चाहिए। जो एक्सेस स्टॉक है, उसका टाइम पर डिस्पोजल होना चाहिए, उसे समुद्र में फिकवाने की जरूरत न पड़े। जहां 16 मिलियन टन की अगर रिक्वायरमेंट है, तो देखना चाहिए कि कितना ऑफ-टेक हो रहा है, उस हिसाब से हमें अपना स्टॉक में रखना चाहिए। मुझे यह भी पता चला है कि मिनिस्टर साहब एफ॰सी॰आई॰ को दुरुस्त करने के लिए मैकेंजी की सर्विसेज ले रहे हैं। मेरा इसमें यह सुझाव होगा कि आप एफ॰सी॰आई॰ को कारपोरेटाइज कर दीजिए, यह गवर्नमेंट के डिपार्टमेंट की तरह न रहे, इसे लिमिटेड बना दीजिए, जिसमें सरकार की मैक्सिमम इक्विटी रखिए और इसके बाद इसको एक कंपनी की तरह से चलाइए, जिससे आप रैस्पॉसिबिलिटी फिक्स करेंगे, एकाउंटेबिलिटी फिक्स करेंगे वरना यह सबसिडी के भरोसे चलता रहता है। मेरा यह जो सुझाव है, इसकी तरफ माननीय मंत्री जी गंभीरता से ध्यान देंगे।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, कन्ज्युमर फोर्म्स का जहां तक सवाल है, कन्ज्युमर फोर्म्स में अकसर देखा गया है कि उनकी हालत बहुत खराब है। कई दफ्तरों में तो इलेक्ट्रिसिटी तक नहीं है और जो प्रेसिडेंट होता है या चेयरमैन होता है, वह रिटायर्ड जुडिशियल आफीसर होता है, उसके पास सारी पावर्स होती हैं और बाकी के जो मैम्बर्स होते हैं, They are ornamental as they are suppose to sign what the Chairman has already decided. तो उनको भी पावर देनी चाहिए और उनकी मजबूती प्रदान की जानी चाहिए।

महोदय, जहां तक बी॰आई॰एस का सवाल है, उसमें स्टैंडर्ड डिसाइड करने के लिए जो सब-कमेटी बनाई जाती है, मेरा कहना है कि उसमें इंटरस्टेड पार्टीज को न रखा जाए, इंडिपेंडेंट इंडीविजुअल को रखना चाहिए। अभी तक यह देखा जा रहा है कि इंटरस्टेड पार्टीज उसमें रख दी जाती हैं और वे अपने हिसाब से काम करती हैं, जो स्टैंडर्ड फिक्स करते हैं। Sub Committee should include shelf-life period of packed material or goods. यह बहुत गंभीर बात है। यह भी देखना चाहिए कि अंदर क्या माल है, उसकी शेल्फ लाइफ क्या है? तो मेरा आग्रह है कि इस ओर ध्यान देना चाहिए, सिर्फ मैम्बर्स बनाने से काम नहीं चलेगा।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, ये पांच-छह पाइंट्स हैं, जो मैं मंत्री जी के नोटिस में लाना चाहता था। मुझे उम्मीद है कि उन्होंने निश्चित रूप से इनका नोटिस लिया होगा और इन्हें अपने उत्तर में शामिल करेंगे। धन्यवाद।

श्री मोतिर रहमान (बिहार): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज यह सदन एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर वाद-विवाद कर रहा है। मैं जन-वितरण प्रणाली के बारे में यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो

भी सरकारें आती हैं, उनकी नीतियां कागज में अच्छी बनती हैं, लेकिन अगर नियत सही नहीं है तो इन नीतियों का फायदा नहीं होता, करोड़ों करोड़ गरीबों तक वह सामान नहीं पहुंच पाता, जिसकी आशा, अभिलाषा इस देश के लोगों की होती है। आज इस सदन में जो जन-वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से पी०डी०एस० के माध्यम से गेहूं देने की बातें हो रही हैं, जो चावल देने की बातें हो रही हैं, मैं समझता हूं कि आप जरा इसकी जांच करवा कर देख लें, आपको पता चलेगा कि 10 प्रतिशत भी इसका क्रियान्वयन सही ढंग से नहीं हो पाता है। उन गरीब लोगों का लाल कार्ड बड़े लोग लेकर जमा कर लेते हैं, पी०डी०एस० के लोग जमा कर लेते हैं, जिससे उन गरीबों को गेहूं, चावल नहीं मिल पाता है। वह मार्केट में चला जाता है, आपके गोदाम में चला जाता है। आपके एफ०सी०आई० के अफसर भी उसको खरीद लेते हैं और बाजार में बेच देते हैं। हमारे बिहार में जो नेपाल का बोर्डर है, वहां से सारा गेहूं नेपाल चला जाता है।

[उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी) पीठासीन हुई।]

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदया, हमारे माननीय मंत्री जी, जो इस देश के सबसे सक्षम मंत्री माने जाते हैं, उनसे मैं आग्रह करना चाहता हूं कि आप जैसे सक्षम मंत्री के जमाने में तो इन गरीबों को, लाल कार्ड, पीले कार्ड वालों को सही तरीके से आपकी इस जन-वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से गेहूं, चावल नहीं मिल सके। इसके लिए आप कोई नियम, कोई कानून बनाने की कृपा करें ताकि गरीबों तक वह गेहूं पहुंच सके, चावल पहुंच सके और मार्केट में जाकर बिक न सके। इससे पहले आपके भंडारों में, आपके गोदामों में गेहूं और चावल की कोई कमी नहीं थी, लेकिन एन०डी०ए की सरकार ने अपनी पावर का दुरुपयोग किया, उस बारे में स्टैंडिंग कमेटी ने सी०बी०आई० की जांच की अनुशंसा की है। जहां तक जानकारी मिली है, बहुत सारे अच्छे गेहूं को सड़े हुए गेहूं का सर्टिफिकेट लेकर उसे बड़े-बड़े सेठ-साहूकारों के हाथों में बेच दिया गया, जिसमें करोड़ों रुपए का घपला हुआ है। मैं मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूं कि जब से श्री शरद पवार जी और उनके राज्य मंत्री आए हैं, इस पर उन्होंने कंट्रोल करने की कोशिश की है, लेकिन स्टैंडिंग कमेटी ने जो सी०बी०आई० से जांच कराने के बारे में अनुशंसा दी है, मैं चाहता हूं कि मंत्री जी सदन को यह बताने की कृपा करें कि उस बारे में क्या प्रोग्रेस हुई है।

इस देश में 17 से 20 करोड़ लोग गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहते हैं, जिनकी हालत उनसे पूछिए, जो देहात में रहते हैं, जो सरजमीं के लोग हैं, उनसे पूछिए कि आज उनकी क्या हालत है। अगर वे पांच किलो खाद्यान्न की मजदूरी न कमाएं, किसानों के खेत में न जाएं, तो मैं समझता हूं कि उनको एक शाम का खाना भी उपलब्ध नहीं हो सकता है। आज देश कहां चला गया है? आज देश बहुत ऊंचाई पर चला गया है, लेकिन अगर इसके बावजूद इस देश का गरीब भूखा मरता है, तो यह शर्म की बात है। इसलिए इस पर विशेष ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए।

जहां तक किसानों को उनकी उपज की सही कीमत न मिलने का सवाल है, तो सही दाम न मिलने के कारण भी लोगों को परेशानियां हैं। ऐसी हालत में मैं आग्रह करना चाहूंगा कि इसका

अध्ययन होना चाहिए और जो किसान मेहनत करके उपज पैदा करते हैं, आपके एफ०सी०आई० के गोदाम में जाने पर उनके साथ तरह-तरह की परेशानियां पेश आती हैं, जिन पर कंट्रोल करने की आवश्यकता है।

मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से आग्रह करना चाहता हूँ कि देश में हर ब्लॉक में आपका गोदाम होना चाहिए। हमारे यहां बिहार के बाढ़ प्रभावित क्षेत्रों में ऐन मौके पर हेलिकॉप्टर से खाद्यान्न गिराने की व्यवस्था आप करते हैं। जब सब लोग भूखे मरते हैं, कोई पूछने वाला नहीं होता है, तो आप सेना का हेलिकॉप्टर मंगाकर उन गरीबों को बेवकूफ बनाने की कोशिश करते हैं, जिनको सही ढंग से गेहूँ, चावल या और सामान नहीं मिल पाता है। जब हेलिकॉप्टर से सामान गिराया जाता है तो वह पानी में चला जाता है, बेचारे गरीब आसमान की तरफ ताकते रह जाते हैं। अगर आप हर ब्लॉक में, हर जगह गोदाम बनाकर पहले से चावल और गेहूँ का भंडारीकरण कर दें, तो मैं समझता हूँ कि इससे देश का बहुत कल्याण होगा।

जहां तक पहले के गोदामों के रख-रखाव का सवाल है, हमारे से पहले बोलने वाले एक सदस्य सही कह रहे थे कि गोदामों का रख-रखाव सही ढंग से नहीं हो पाता है, जिसके कारण उनमें गेहूँ बर्बाद होता है, चूहे और तरह-तरह के कीड़े-मकोड़े गेहूँ में पड़ जाते हैं और गरीबों में आप उसका इस्तेमाल करते हैं। इसलिए मैं आपसे मांग करता हूँ कि गोदामों का इस तरह से निर्माण कराया जाए, उनमें ऐसी व्यवस्था की जाए ताकि उनमें चूहे और कीड़े-मकोड़े आदि न जा सकें ताकि गरीबों की सेहत पर बुरा असर न पड़े। यह सबसे बड़ी ध्यान देने योग्य बात है।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदया, अब मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से शुगर के बारे में कुछ कहना चाहता हूँ, जो सबसे महत्वपूर्ण बात है। आज मैंने आपका प्रतिवेदन देखा और पढ़ा है। हर साल शुगर की उपज कम होती जा रही है। इस देश की बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण चीज़, जो शुगर है, उसकी उपज कम होती जा रही है, आखिर इसका कारण क्या है, इसकी समीक्षा होनी चाहिए? बहुत सारी चीनी मिलें बंद क्यों हैं? चीनी मिलों और शुगर से जिस मंत्री को इतनी दिलचस्पी रही है, महाराष्ट्र में यदि शुगर को बढ़ावा मिला, तो वह श्री शरद पवार जी की देन थी, जो आज हमारे देश के कृषि मंत्री हैं। इन्हें पूरे देश की शुगर मिलों के संबंध में सोचना चाहिए। बिहार के चम्पारण जिले में अभी दस चीनी मिलें बंद हैं। चकिया, चनपटिया, भारत सरकार की चीनी मिलें हैं किन्तु दुर्भाग्य से सारी व्यवस्था होने के बावजूद, सारी ज़मीन-जायदाद होने के बावजूद, सभी मिलें अच्छी होने के बावजूद, भारत सरकार की डिटर्मिनेशन की कमी के कारण आज वे मिलें बंद हैं, जिसके कारण लाखों किसान परेशान हैं। यदि वे चीनी मिलें चल जाएं, तो मैं समझता हूँ कि वहां के किसानों की दुआओं की बदौलत माननीय शरद पवार जी सौ वर्ष तक जिन्दा रहेंगे, वहां के किसान लोग इनके लिए अवश्य दुआ मांगेंगे। मोतिहारी चीनी मिल, बिरला ग्रुप की है। उसका मालिक इतना बड़ा करप्ट है, इतना बड़ा अय्याश है कि वह किसानों का 17 करोड़ रुपया लेकर भाग गया। उसे जेल में बंद कर दिया जाना चाहिए और उसकी सारी प्रॉपर्टी को जब्त कर लिया जाना चाहिए, लेकिन आपका डिटर्मिनेशन नहीं

होगा, आप उस पर कड़ाई नहीं कर सकेंगे। आज किसान चिल्ला रहें हैं, लेकिन कोई भी उन्हें पूछने वाला नहीं है।

मोतिहारी ज़िले से ही कृषि राज्य मंत्री, श्री अखिलेश प्रसाद सिंह जी हैं, वे मोतिहारी ज़िले से ही एम्प्ली निर्वचित हुए हैं और खुशकिस्मती है कि आज वे कृषि राज्य मंत्री हैं। मैं उनसे आग्रह करना चाहता हूँ कि आप इन चीनी मिलों को चालू करवाएं और किसानों का जो पैसा है, जो आपने बहुत ही मेहनत करके बिहार को भेजा है, मैं पुनः उनसे आग्रह करना चाहता हूँ कि उन्होंने मेहनत करके जो पैसा भेजा है, उसे वसूल करें। सुगौली चीनी मिल बंद है, मझौलिया चीनी मिल चल तो रही है, लेकिन वह भी दम तोड़ने की स्थिति में है, और भी बहुत सारी चीनी मिलें हैं, इन पर ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए।

गन्ने का मूल्य यू०पी० में दूसरा होता है, बिहार में दूसरा होता है। पूरे देश में चीनी मिल का एक ही दाम होना चाहिए और जिससे सभी किसानों को लाभ पहुंच सके। जहां तक तेल खाद्यान्न का सवाल है अथवा तेल उत्पादन का सवाल है, हर ब्लाक में जांच मिशन बैठना चाहिए, जांच के लिए कोई कमेटी बैठनी चाहिए, अन्य और भी व्यवस्थाएं होनी चाहिए। यह बात सही है कि एक वर्ष की व्यवस्था में जो सुधार हुआ है, उसके लिए यह सदन, माननीय मंत्री श्री शरद पवार जी एवं राज्य मंत्री श्री अखिलेश सिंह जी को जितना भी धन्यवाद दिया जाए, कम है। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ।

SHRI R.S. GAVAI (Maharashtra): Madam, Chairperson, I am dealing with the Public Distribution System. I have chosen this subject because it is a vital subject as far as the poorer section of the country is concerned.

Madam, Chairperson, I had an opportunity, on a number of occasions, to discuss these issues, particularly, regarding the irregularities in identifying people below poverty line, with the hon. Agriculture Minister, Shri Sharad Pawarji. And I found out that he expressed a great concern on these very vital issues. Therefore, I want to draw his attention towards my small speech, which will deal with the Public Distribution System. Fortunately, he is dealing with the concerned Department so, I am quite hopeful that he will, definitely, take cognizance of it.

Madam, the problem which the country is facing is not of shortfall or shortage of food grains rather it is a problem of how to manage the surplus. It is a matter of great concern to all of us. On a number of occasions, we discussed the issues of malnutrition and half-nutrition. We also discussed the issues of thousands of deaths occurring number of times. Madam, despite having sufficient stock of foodgrains, the production being satisfactory and procurement being satisfactory, even then, I am sorry to

say, we are facing the problems of malnutrition and starvation. As far as our country is concerned, it is land of plenty. There is a contrast here. It is a land of plenty but there exists greater poverty. This is a great contrast. Madam, the challenge before the country is how to reduce the food stock, roughly, half of the present stock, thereby reducing the malnutrition without affecting the farmers and the cultivators. I don't want to deal with the mechanism to be adopted for this. I switch on further to the other issue. Madam, why is it happening? What are the reasons for such a peculiar condition? It is only because, I can boldly say this, large amounts of grains are being diverted in various forms, through irregularities, mischief, black market etc. madam, how to deal with the mechanism? There is a network of half a million ration shops and fair price shops. The petty traders, who run such shops throughout the country, divert the foodgrain quota into black market, hoarding, etc. madam, the survey reveals, in the capital of Delhi alone, 67 per cent of the foodgrains goes down the drain. The survey reveals that to the tune of 50 per cent, there is a diversion of foodgrains throughout the country. I have mentioned earlier also in the UPA meeting what late Rajiv Gandhi said. He said, "It is a matter of great concern that out of a rupee meant for the welfare scheme for the poor sections, only 15 naya paise reaches to them and 85 paise goes down the drain. This remark was made by late Rajiv Gandhi, during a meeting. And, after 25 years, the position of the nation is static, that is, the same. There is no change. I would only say that mafia, black marketers and those who indulge in irregularities are so strong that their voice cannot be curbed by the administration. And they don't pay any heed to the voices of the people. That is the only problem.

Madam, as mentioned by the BPL lady, my sister Shrimati Bimba Raikar, ... (*Interruptions*).. yes, she is my sister, we have a relation between Maharashtra and Karnataka. She is really my sister.. (*Interruptions*)..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI): Okay, tell us what you want to say about your sister.

SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Madam, I don't want to define the BPL and the APL. Probably, we, the people's representatives, must know what is BPL, what is APL, because it is a moral bounden duty of all of us to look after the people who are below poverty line. Now, the main thing is, the people who are below poverty line, have more ration quota, and that too at a cheaper rate, I need not elaborate it. The people who are above poverty line, that is, APL, are, of course, eligible to have foodgrains, cereals from the Fair Price Shops, the Controlled Rate Shops, at a rather higher rate and their

5.00 P.M.

quota is lesser than the BPL quota. (*Time-bell*) I do agree with her suggestion that where is the necessity for having a subsidy for the APL. That will, again, encourage the spirit of the corruption, because the people who are above poverty line don't bother about the fair price shops. They purchase food of their choice, they purchase wheat, rice of their choice. A sample survey reveals that such persons accumulate the grain and sell in the black market. So, it is a two-way loss. One is, they are misusing the subsidy, and number two, are encouraging the black marketeers. Therefore, I suggest that I am not against the APL, certainly, I am not, how can I, but at the same time there is no need to have any subsidy or concession for the people who are above poverty line. Madam, I am dealing with a very vital issue of Below Poverty Line and obtaining the Below Poverty Line cards. What is the mechanism of obtaining these BPL cards? There is a very faulty mechanism. The Report of the Planning Commission reveals that those who are needy won't get a BPL card. The BPL cards are being managed and obtained by the APL persons. ... (*Interruptions*)... The mechanism is that they are obtained with the help of the administrator. They are a party to it. So, Madam, if the benefits of the scheme which relates to the welfare of the poorer persons and for which the Government Exchequer we are spending thousands of crores of rupees are not reaching the poor people, the very purpose of it is defeated.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI): Gavai Sahib, kindly conclude.

SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Madam, I will take only two minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI): There are still six speakers.

SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Madam, I will take only two minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI): Kindly conclude.

SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Madam, you have been kind enough. Please give me one or two minutes more. I have come across thousands of cases. ... (*Interruptions*)... I am talking not only about Maharashtra, but about the whole country. I am speaking for the whole country, neither for Karnataka nor for Andhra, but for the whole country. ... (*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI): Okay, make the point.

SHRI R.S. GAVAI: You know that in fixing up the identity of the BPL, there is a *modus operandi*. What is that? Somebody has referred that the criteria fixed up for identifying the Below Poverty Line are all outdated. There is nothing, but humiliation of the poor. हिन्दी में कहावत है, 'बाबा आदम के जमाने की बात कर रहे हैं' उसको बदलने की आवश्यकता है।

Those criteria are now outdated. Madam, the other problem is that the poor people in the villages who belong to the BPL category are feeling hatred towards the APL families, and saying that 'those who are not eligible to have the concessions are getting the concessions'. That is the conflict. So, I will request the hon. Agriculture Minister to kindly look into this aspect he has also agreed with me, in a number of private discussions, that there is a need to change the criteria, how to fix up the mechanism to deal with this problem and fix up the criteria for identifying the people living below the poverty line. ... (*Time-bell*)... I will sum up, Madam.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI): Still, you have to sum up!

SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Madam, I will finish within one minute.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI): Kindly bear with us.

SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Madam, forget about the public distribution system. Whatever schemes related to the welfare of poor people like Antyodaya, etc., the pre-requisite is that he must have a BPL card, and the real thing is that the BPL cards are not given to the BPL people. On the contrary, they are being made available to the APL people. Unless and until we find out a mechanism to identify the people living below poverty line, thousands of crores of rupees that we are spending on various schemes meant for the poor people will be a waste. Thank you, Madam.

### MESSAGES FROM LOK SABHA

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी): सैक्रेटरी जनरल साहब, लोक सभा से आए हुए संदेश को पढ़कर सुनाएंगे।

(i) The Finance Bill, 2005.

(ii) The Government of Union Territories and the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report to the House the following messages received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha: