

(c) and (d) All Products covered under BIS Certification scheme are being tested regularly for ensuring its conformity to relevant Indian Standard. Surveillance is carried out at licensee's end by BIS officers and agencies appointed under the provision of Section 10(1) of BIS Act, 1986. Samples are drawn from factory as well as market and tested independently. Testing of ISI marked product is carried out in BIS laboratories and other laboratories recognized by BIS in strict conformity with legal provisions in Section 10(1) of BIS Act, 1986.

Improving food distribution policy

2810. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that, though godowns are full, people are still starving the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has warned the Government about the serious faulty food distribution policy leading to creation of two sections of Indians of haves and have-nots;
- (d) whether it is also a fact that the Supreme Court has also rejected the argument that the malnutrition has come down;
- (e) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and
- (f) the steps taken by Government to correct the food distribution policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (e) The increased procurement of rice and wheat during the last three years and the current year have resulted in surplus stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool. For tackling the problem of starvation and malnutrition to ensure that people living below poverty line get adequate foodgrains, Government is providing foodgrains at highly subsidized prices to the targeted population through the State Governments/Union Territory (UT) Administrations under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) such as Mid-Day-Meal Scheme, Wheat Based Nutrition Programme, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG), Annapurna, Emergency Feeding Programme, Welfare Institutions Scheme and Village Grain Bank Scheme. During 2011-12, under TPDS and OWS, a quantity of 589.64 lakh tonnes of foodgrains have been allocated to States/UTs.

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. While the Central Government is responsible for procurement and allocation of foodgrains to the States and UTs, the operational responsibility for lifting the allocated foodgrains and its distribution within the States/UTs, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them and

supervision and monitoring of functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) rests with the concerned State/UT Government.

State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have not reported any incidence of starvation.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 14.5.2011 has directed the Government of India, that to ensure no starvation deaths may take place and people can be saved from malnutrition as far as possible, to reserve 5 million tonnes of foodgrains for allocation to the 150 poorest districts or other poorer segments of the society. Pursuant to the above orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the recommendations made by the Central Vigilance Committee on Public Distribution System, additional allocation of 3.87 lakh M.Ts of rice and wheat have been made for three months to 74 districts in thirteen States.

(f) Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has been regularly issuing advisories and requesting State/UT Governments for continuous review of lists of BPL and AAY families, ensuring timely availability of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops and greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, improved monitoring and vigilance at different levels and introduction of new technologies such as computerization of TPDS operations.

Containing prices of fruits and vegetables

2811. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR:

SHRI BHARATSINH PRABHATSINH PARMAR:

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

(a) whether prices of vegetables and fruits including onion, tomato, garlic and apple have risen in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the reasons therefor, item-wise;

(c) whether the increase in the export quota of the same including onion has contributed to the rise in prices of such produce;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to bring down the prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The wholesale price indices of Fruits and Vegetables which include onion, tomato, apple and garlic, has reduced from the level of 206.6 during the month of January, 2011 to the level of 191.4 during the month of July, 2011, registering a decline of 7.35%.

(c) to (e) There is no export quota for fruits and vegetables, including onion. Government had taken various steps to reduce the prices of vegetables such as onion by calibrating the Minimum Export Price (MEP) of onion to control the exports of onion and thereby contain their price rise.