

CSD further advances loans to URC. If the accounts of URC are not open to audit how can we check the misuse of that fund?

SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU : Sir, if I may outline the structure of the CSD, the CSD is the network of 3,733 unit-run canteens, which are also known as CSD canteens. These are serviced by the Central Base Depot and 34 other depots. The CSD supplies the materials to the 3,733 URCs and a quantitative discount, by way of goods, is passed on to these URCs. The Comptroller and Auditor General had commented on the way this quantitative discount is given and also on the transparency and the way the benefits, accruing out of that, are utilized. The Board, subsequently, held a meeting and formulated guidelines in accordance with the observation of the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Public Accounts Committee has also commented on it, which is under examination in the Ministry.

SHRI SHADI LAL BATRA : Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister of Defence was that URCs are not running out of public funds. Now, it has been admitted that the CSD is advancing loans to the URCs. I would like to know how much amount is involved in it, how much amount has been advanced by the CSD to the URCs.

SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU : Sir, the quantitative discount, which comes to the canteens, through the CSD, has been increasing every year. I think, it is to the tune of Rs. 238 crores this year. Now, the guidelines have been formulated as to how this fund is utilized. A separate account, called CSDQD, is being maintained by the URCs. Guidelines have also been issued that are strictly for the benefit of the troops and also the ex-service men. And, this has to be submitted every year.

SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA : Sir, there have been a lot of allegations that firearms and hardware of the Army are inadequate and outdated. In this context, I would like to know what the action plan of the Government is to modernise our Armed Forces and to bridge the present gap in the latest arms equipments. And, in what timeframe would all these gaps be bridged?

SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU : Sir, the question does not pertain to the CSD.

Outdated Ration Given to Army Soldiers

*366. SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that army soldiers were given outdated ration;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that samples taken from the army canteen were sent to food laboratories;
- (c) if so, the reports on the said samples;

(d) whether it is also a fact that an action plan has been formulated to rectify the flawed system of purchase of ration items; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Army Service Corps (ASC) at Army Headquarters has been entrusted with the task of provisioning and issue of all items of rations to troops of the Indian Army. To ensure efficiency and accountability in the process of provisioning, procurement and supply of rations, well laid down procedures have been prescribed under delegated powers. Measures are in place to ensure an effective supply chain of rations.

Based on the recommendations of C&AG Report No.6 of 2010-11 on Performance Audit of supply chain management of rations in Army, a High Level Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of the Quarter Master General (QMG) to suggest the systemic reforms. As a follow up of the recommendations of the High Level Committee, QMG has forwarded 18 proposals in their Study Report submitted to the Ministry. A number of initiatives have been taken to achieve a superior satisfaction level. Some of the major initiatives taken for improvements/introduction of new items in respect of rations are as under:

- (i) Increase in Scale of Meat/Chicken (Broiler) dressed for JCOs/OR.
- (ii) Increase in Scale of Eggs and Fruit fresh for JCOs/OR.
- (iii) Authorization of Frozen Meat/Chicken (Broiler) dressed as substitute to Meat/Chicken (Broiler) dressed.
- (iv) Authorization of Special Ration to Troops Deployed above 12000 feet.
- (v) Authorization of Goat/Sheep meat as per Preference of Troops.
- (vi) Procurement of Soft Drinks in Lieu of Aerated Water.
- (vii) Authorisation of Special Scale of Rations to Students Attending Ghatak Course.
- (viii) Procurement of Branded Wheat Atta Whole Meal Instead of Grinded Wheat.
- (ix) Procurement of Branded Refined Salt.
- (x) Introduction of Ready to Eat Vegetable in Retort Pouches with longer self life Instead of Vegetable Dehydrate.

- (xi) Introduction of Ready to Eat Chicken in Retort Pouches with longer self life.

Samples for testing are taken at regular intervals by Canteen Store Department (CSD) from CSD Depots at the locations where Composite Food Laboratories (CFL) are located for all the food items and not from army canteens. Action thereafter is taken on the basis of test results.

Details of the samples tested during the last financial year i.e. in 2011-12 are as under:

Sl. No.	Details	Number
1.	Food samples sent for CFL Test	444
2.	Food samples passed CFL Test	442
3.	Food samples failed CFL Test	01
4.	Verdict awaited of CFL Test of food items	01

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI : Sir, samples, which were sent for examination, were found to be of inferior quality. But, the statement says that nothing adverse was found. Will the hon. Minister re-enquire into it and formulate a policy which would rectify such flaws and see to it that it does not recur in future?

SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU : Sir, the question pertains to the quality of procurements that the Armed Forces make for the troops and for the various formations across the country. I will just outline some of the initiatives that we have taken to ensure that the quality is not compromised. We have started procuring branded wheat *aata* from reputed vendors, instead of procuring wheat and grinding it. We have increased the scale of rations of the supplies to the other ranks and the soldiers. There has been local procurement, as far as fresh rations are concerned. We have made attempts to diversify the vendor base to ensure quality and quantity of the supply. There are also a couple of proposals which relate to 20 per cent of the total provision of quantity of pulses and edible oils to be purchased from reputed bulk producing countries. This is under consideration. Another proposal is to procure 25 per cent of the total provision of quantity of rice, with better specifications, directly from the mills. So, every attempt is being made to improve the quality of rations. As far as quality control is concerned, we have labs in place which are in accordance with the national rules. All steps are being taken to ensure the supply of good quality of ration across the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Thank you. Question Hour is over.