

payment of equity by GOI and also for permitting it to convert itself into a bank for its survival. Otherwise, it will also die the way the other SFCs have.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet at 2.00 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at thirty-three minutes past twelve of the clock

The House reassembled after lunch at two minutes past two of the clock,

[MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

Public Distribution System in the country

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up the Short Duration Discussion on the Public Distribution System in the country. Shrimati Brinda Karat.

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी (पश्चिमी बंगाल):सर, आज इनका मेडन स्पीच है।

श्री सभापति: अगर आपका भाषण अच्छा हुआ तो आपको सभी को मिटाई खिलानी पड़ेगी।

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I would like to express my appreciation to you and, through you, to the leaders of this House who have allotted the time for a discussion on such an important issue for the large majority of the people in our country. Particularly, when there are so many competing issues for public attention, I think, it is very important to bring back on to our political agendas the issues of the poor. And to that extent, the issue of food security, the various dimensions of the issue of food security, the direction of the Government policies on the issue of food security have a very wide impact on the largest number of our people. When we talk about food security, Sir, just to have a benchmark of what we mean by food security, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has defined it "as the economic and physical access for all people, at all times to have enough food to lead a healthy life". And from this angle, we have to see how far our Public Distribution System, how far the different dimensions of our food security policies ally themselves or align themselves to this international standard. Although the debate today is definitely going to be focussed on

Public Distribution System, Sir, there are two very important components of the Public Distribution System, which I would just like to mention. One is the whole issue of production of foodgrains and the procurement of those foodgrains. I think, the entire House will agree that one of the achievements of independent India is that we have now become self-sufficient in foodgrains production. In those days of the fifties', we had to depend on the United States of America for PL-480 and all the tensions and conditions were there. We are out of that trap. It is a tribute to our farmers, first and the foremost. But having said that we have achieved this, there is a disturbing trend, which has also been noted in the mid-term plan appraisal, at the poor performance of the agricultural sector and the slow down in the growth rate of cereal production. And although there may be many factors including natural calamities, there is a concern, Sir, about the thrust of the Government for export oriented strategies, the thrust of the Government in the name of diversification to shift from food-grains production to cash crop production. We are not against diversification; even in West Bengal, now we are the highest potato producers in India, now we are exporting flowers to the European Union, etc. We are not against diversification. But the basic bricks of food security depend on protecting the required amount for cereal production and that level has to be maintained. That is one point that I would like to flag.

Secondly, linked with this, Sir, is the procurement policy and, I think, this entire House is committed to protect the rights of the peasantry against the vagaries of the market as far as procurement is concerned. But what is disturbing, is that in December 2004, the Finance Ministry has come out with a white paper for discussion analysing the subsidies, including food subsidies, in which they have floated an idea to end open-ended procurement. What they are suggesting is that FCI should suspend purchase operations once targets are achieved, the FCI should have the flexibility of adding to these targets quantities in specific markets only in case overall procurement falls short of the target in other markets. In other words, Sir, on the crucial aspect of open-ended procurement, keeping in view the interests of our peasants, if there is any move, at all, on behalf of the Finance Ministry to curtail this right of the peasants, this benefit of the peasants, we strongly oppose it. We have to reaffirm through this debate that we are committed to procurement, we are committed to minimum support price. In fact, Sir, what we would like is to extend minimum support price to other food-grains also, including coarse grains which in many States are the staple diet of the poor.

Sir, the other aspect is transport and storage. I am not going into the details except saying that we know that there are many problems with the FCI, there are questions of leakages, corruption; but in a country where some States are food deficit, some States are food surplus, in such a situation, the issue of storage and transportation, alongwith the issue of price stabilisation and to ensure food security to remote areas of our country, is very crucial. Therefore, the necessity to strengthen the FCI operations in this country and appreciate the role of the FCI, while reforming whatever leakages there may be, is another very important component of food security.

Now, coming to the issue of public distribution system, we need to put it in the real context of the increasing hunger of our people, I hope, there are not going to be differences in this House on actually assessing the extent of hunger, because we have seen certain statements and certain articles written by some Members of Parliament in which they have argued that in fact, in India, hunger is decreasing. How do you measure hunger? You can measure it through calorie intake. If you measure through calorie intake, then-all the statistics show that there is a decrease in calorie intake. In other words, more Indians are eating less than they were, say, 20 or 25 years ago. In fact, there are some assessments to say that we are back to the time of famine in the ' 40s as far as per capita food availability is concerned. Another way to look at it is, Sir, to look at nutrition figures, from the nutrition view. Here, it is so shocking that 50 per cent of our children are malnourished. About 50 per cent of all our adults are under-nourished or malnourished. A large number of women, about 75 per cent, I think, if you just look at our rural women, I would say, 70-75 per cent of our women suffer from different degrees of anemia. This is not something genetic or biological; this is simply because they are not getting enough to eat. And because of female malnourishment, if you even look at the birth weight of our babies, it is so shocking that in India, 25-30 per cent of our newborn babies are underweight, compared with other countries, in China it is 6 per cent, in Malaysia it is 7 per cent, 7 per cent even in Sri Lanka, Sir; but in India, 25-30 per cent of our children are underweight. So, I tell you, Sir, because I speak here on the basis of the various campaigns we have held on the issue of food and food security. You will be shocked to hear about the different linkages between food insecurity and other aspects of the lives of the people, particularly women, because in a patriarchal society, Sir, it is a fact that where there is less food in a house, where there is more poverty in households, where there is growing unemployment, then the main burden

of it is taken by women. In our service that we have done in about 14 to 15 States at grassroot levels, from village to village and the impact on women, for example, because of food insecurity, a woman today where she has no guaranteed income is working for wages far below the minimum wages. So, labour reform, in fact, is already there in rural India because minimum wages not the issue because she herself on her own need for food to feed her family, she is accepting loans. The second thing, because she is eating less her health is impacted, as I have already said. And the third, and this is an invisible cause, Sir, when economic vulnerability increases and particularly when the core which is food vulnerability and food insecurity increases, their degree of abuse, whether it is sexual abuse, whether it is abuse of human dignity, whether it is the language that poor rural women have to face, whether it is her dependence on contractors, on supervisors, on shopkeepers whom she is indebted to; and different aspects even, Sir, of violence and how violence increases in the area of food insecurity. So, these are some of the issues which we have flagged. As I have said it is invisible, you cannot count it, you cannot quantify that these are the statistics of women who have complained about it. But this is the reality for an increasing number of poor women. This is happening, Sir, at a time where . there is growing unemployment, there is growing joblessness, in that situation unless we can guarantee the minimum human right of food, we can never protect the citizenship rights of our people. Coming to that, Sir, it is in this context of increased hunger that what is most distressing at present is the state of the Public Distribution System. Recently in June, I am sure all the hon. Members have read it the Planning Commission has made on evaluation of the Public Distribution System which was published in June, an absolutely devastating critique, more so, in the context of the glaring increasing rural distress. I do not discount the issues that have been raised in the evaluation. That evaluation says that today 57 per cent of the poor are outside the BPL category, they do not have BPL cards. It says that over half of the BPL foodgrains meant for the poor are not reaching the poor. It says that there are huge leakages and corruption, even in the issuing of ration cards and our own experience substantiates that. And along with that the subsidy actually for the poor, they are saying it is even less than one-third. So, if this is the state of Public Distribution System at a time when hunger is increasing in India, then we have to ask ourselves what is the reason for it. We have got food production, we have got a good system of transport and storage and yet people who are getting increasingly hungry do not have access to it. What

is the reason? Now, till 1997, we had what is called a Universal Public Distribution, that is, everyone had equal access at the same price to the foodgrains available in the ration shops, whatever the quota was. In 1997, under the leadership of our present Finance Minister a new planning was done on the basis of this understanding that actually the rationing system is not reaching those for whom it is meant, so, let us have a more targeted system of public distribution, so we can focus on the poor and convey and ensure that this supply of foodgrains reaches those for whom it is meant. Very good intentions, Sir, excellent intentions! But from 1997 to 2005 what is actually the result of the targeting system? And this is, Sir, what I want to stress today in this debate because I believe that this targeting system, the ideology for targeting is driven not by the interests of the people of India, it is driven by the WTO, the World Bank and other international institutions who have been saying, Sir, that subsidies for the poor and the subsidies for food have to be cut. I have the quotes from the World Bank Report. I am not going to take the time of the House to read it. But, I am sure, you are all aware of what the World Bank is saying. Even today, at the WTO, one of the contentious issues, which we are discussing, is, "do not compromise the interests of the poor and the subsidies for the poor". The fact is that this system of targeting has utterly failed. This is not something which we are saying from the Left, because, very often, it is said, 'you people have got your own agenda.' This is not something we are saying. This has been said by a Committee, set up by the former NDA Government, headed by an eminent economist, Shri Abhijit Sen. What has he said? I will, with your permission, just read it out. It says, "Data on quantities allocated and quantities purchased by commodities, after the introduction of the Targeted Public Distribution System, show that the main factor in the decline in offtake is a total collapse in demand from the APL consumers. The policy of equating Issue Prices with economic cost does have a deciding effect of excluding APL consumers from the PDS." Then, it gave figures where 76.7 per cent of allocation was lifted in 1998-99 and it fell down to 30 per cent and then came down to just 3.8 per cent in 2000-01. And, there is a similar pattern as far as rice is concerned. Even the BPL offtake has come down. But, fortunately, those people who use these statistics to push for more reform and say that now you should give up targeting, this Report says that this is because of lack of physical access as also the way the Ration Shops function, etc. One point here is: the system of targeting in which we divided the population into APL and BPL and further into Antyodaya - there are three different cards for one Ration Shop,

differentiation in prices, differentiation in population - according to all Government Reports has utterly failed. When we say failed, a very important aspect of that failure according to me is this. One of the most criminal things that has happened is the destruction of the most valuable social sector infrastructure. India could boast in 80s and 90s of having one of the best distribution systems in the world. We had a network of about 5 lakh Fair Price Shops. What has it actually meant? Whatever we may say about the Ration Shop owners; we can say that some of them are corrupt, they are responsible for leakages, they are selling in black-market, etc., I agree with everything. That is correct. But, at the same time, because of this policy of targeting, we have virtually destroyed the PDS, starting with the Fair Price Shops. It is not economically viable to run them. I will give you an example of Kerala. In Kerala, we have a system of which we could be proud of. More certainly, Sir, I think, we can, at least, claim some of that credit as far as my own party is concerned in setting up of that system. Sir, there was 96 per cent of coverage in Kerala. It was the highest in the country. What has happened in the last seven to eight years? It has been destroyed. A study has been carried out. According to this, one Ration Shop in Kerala used to sell an average 7,000 kgs. of rice a month. Today it has come down to 2,000 kgs. One Ration Shop in Kerala used to sell about 2,500 kgs. of wheat. Today, it has come down to 200 kgs. What is the net result? Sir, 5,000 Ration Shops in Kerala have been closed "down. If this is the system in Kerala where Fair Price Shops/Ration Shops are closing down, what is going to be the situation in other States where in any case it was started at much lower profile and have a much weaker system. There it is in a state of utter collapse. Therefore, one aspect of targeting is the destruction of the most crucial social sector infrastructure in this country which, I think, is doing a great injustice not only to the present generation, but also to the future generations who will require food security more and more' in the current economic world situation. Whom is it meant for? The poor. I say, supposing, everything is done and yet the poor is not benefited. But, as I have said, the Planning Commission itself has said that 57 per cent of the poor are left out from the BPL category. Why is it so? This is the other aspect that we really have to consider seriously in this House. How are the poor to be identified? It is raised again and again what are the poverty line estimates; how are these estimates done; who is considered poor in this country? And, in a situation where universal rights are being privatised, where to have a BPL card, today, is, at least, one aspect of sheer survival. Just for survival, for the

right to live today, you need a BPL card. If you don't have it, you can't even go to a Government hospital for proper treatment without paying huge sums. So, where the BPL cards mean so much to the poor, how do we measure poverty? I had raised a parliamentary question. Unfortunately it did not come up for oral answer, but I have got a written answer to that. The answer says that the present concept of poverty line is based on the per capita consumption expenditure needed to attain a minimum amount of calorie intake out of food consumption, along with a minimum amount of non-food expenditure. And, this calculation is done on the basis of the Lakadawala Committee. On the basis of that they use the figures and they extrapolate from that, and, thus, the poverty estimates are made, and given to each State. Now, what is the income of the poverty estimate? Food and non-food - Rs. 327 per month, that is, Rs. 11 per day. Now, I ask you, Sir, is it a poverty line; is it a destitution line; is it a starvation line? And, if this is the way in which we are going to define the poor in this country, I want to ask you, and through you, this House, is it not the most cruel method of statistically trying to invisibilise a reality? Our statistics are made for manipulation, Sir! So many economists have questioned this poverty line estimate. I asked the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has given me this answer. In which it says, "No, there is no need to set up any committee; we are not setting up any committee". So, Sir, the first thing that I want to raise is this. Please set up a committee with economists who are aware of the Indian realities, and not the realities only in Hong Kong. And, to understand those realities, please let them have new methodologies of assessing poverty. That is one point. This income line, I say, this poverty line is a line for destitution. Now, if you take this as a poverty line, then, who is APL? जो हमारे हिंदी भाषी इलाके हैं, हम तो अब वहां बहुत काम करते हैं। हम लोगों ने देखा है कि उनके पास जो कार्ड हैं वे BPL गरीबी रेखा के नीचे वाले कार्ड हैं। उन कार्डों में क्या लिखा है? उनमें यह लिखा है कि अमीरी कार्ड।

श्री सभापति: क्या?

श्रीमती वृंदा कारत: अमीरी कार्ड। जो अमीरी कार्ड है, अगर इनका एसिसमेंट लें तो 327 रुपए का गरीबी कार्ड है तो 500 रुपए का अमीरी कार्ड है। सर, यह एक हमला हो रहा है। हम पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम में अमीरी कार्ड को फायदा क्यों पहुंचा रहे हैं? हमें पहले तो यह देखना पड़ेगा अमीरी कार्ड कौन सा है और इसमें इतनी कूरता है, क्योंकि आज हम इस देश में BPL की बात कर रहे हैं। मैं कहती हूँ कि अच्छा ठीक है, एक तो हमारी यह डिमांड है कि एक कमेटी बनाई जाए। दूसरी बात यह है कि हम देखें कि अगर घपला है, तो सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट की एक एसिसमेंट हैं। हमने कह दिया कि फलां स्टेट को, हम नाम नहीं ले रहे हैं कि हमारी एसिस्टमेंट से आपकी पावर्टी एस्टिमेंट 30 परसेंट है तो हम आपको 30 परसेंट के हिसाब से

[14 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

एलोकेशन करेंगे। सर, सन् 2000 में पहली बार यह सेंटर और स्टेट का लिंकेज हो गया। इससे पहले स्टेटों को अधिकार होता था और वे तय करते थे, तथा युटिलाइजेशन के आधार पर उनके ग्रेन एलोकेशन होता था। अब यह क्या हो गया है अब सैन्टर का अपना असिस्मेंट है, फिर स्टेट रूरल डेवलपमेंट मिनिस्ट्री की मदद से वह BPL census करते हैं। अब जब मैंने उसके आधार पर पूछा तो उन्होंने मुझे यह जवाब दिया. "The BPL Census 1992 and Census 1997, based on income expenditure approach, respectively became subject to criticism because of the exclusion criteria. Now, we are doing something." So, what does this mean, Sir? One, you have the Central quotas; two, you have State assessments, which, in any case, are very wrong. According to what the Rural Development Ministry has answered me, the method itself is wrong. But, suppose, in my State, my survey shows that I have 44 per cent under the BPL and the Centre tells me, 'No, according to Lakhdawala Committee assessments and our extrapolations, you have only 30 per cent, what will happen to that 14 per cent whom I have identified? So, I have to cut them out of the BPL list. So, what I am also doing is, I am politically going into this area where I am dividing the poor arbitrarily. Then, is this not going to lead to corruption? When my assessment is showing 44 per cent, the Centre's link is showing 30 per cent, I have to cut 14 per cent from my list. This is what we are doing. We are cutting it. So, this gap in poverty assessments, according to us and our experience, is something which requires urgent reform in favour of the poor.

The third point I want to make is this. Suppose, the best BPL criterion is kept. Even then, for benefits to food security, why use this criteria? Because, after all, in our country, the largest section of people do not have a fixed income. They have fluctuating incomes. There is the unorganised sector; peasants. We have seen it. You go to the National Food-for-Work Programme site. I have been to 80 sites in five States. Who are the people there? Many of them are people who have got land. But the land is not giving the required income, in fact, it is the reverse; the land has got them into debt. They are going to the Food-for-Work Programme to work as manual labour from morning till night without a BPL card. So, when incomes are fluctuating, when the unorganised sector is growing, when the organised sector, because of new liberal reforms, is being pushed out of guaranteed benefits, which are the hall mark of any civilized society, we are taking our people out of that net, then, Sir, then, at least, for this basic right to food, let us not have this *lakir ke fakir ki* methodology. There is a drought. Unless I get drought relief, it will push me into poverty. But I will not get a BPL card. And, there have been recurring drought or flood. I tell you, Sir, - our friends from the North East may be here, I do not know,

- in the last 58 years, for 55 years there have been recurring floods in Assam, year-after-year. But find out from Assam, have those people got BPL cards? No; they have not got. But they are in poverty. They are in sheer distress. But, because of these assessments of poverty, they do not have cards. Because of the nature of work of majority of the Indian population we cannot, according to me, link a right to food, a basic human right, to this kind of identification.

Now, Sir, on the basis of this I just want to make one point. We are afraid that, 'Oh, we are including the rich.' Sir, there is a worldwide experience on this. The top 25-30 per cent of our population have never gone to a ration shop. There is a process of self-exclusion, but the cost that you pay for errors of inclusion is much, much less than the cost you pay for the errors of exclusion. And, it is errors of exclusion today which mark the way the Public Distribution System is working. Therefore, Sir, we have to consider whether at all we use these lines and figures of BPL assessment which is there.

Sir, I" come to my last point. Now, what are the alternatives? There are so many Government documents which have said अरे भाई अगर इस PDS सिस्टम को नहीं समाप्त करेंगे , तो हिंदुस्तान का आर्थिक ढांचा चौपट हो जाएगा बार-बार एक सवाल उठता है कि what about subsidies? Now, if you look at the issue of subsidies, .as we have already seen, anyway, the consumer is getting 1/3. And, if you look at why subsidies went up so high in the last four years, it is a lesson to be learnt. And, I am sure, my friends in the NDA have understood that lesson, and learnt that lesson, which all of us have to learn, including those who are sitting in the UPA Government today. If they do not learn those lessons, where will they be going? What is the lesson? What happened? Because of this obsession of targeting, and the commitment to a targeted system, you had a situation where you had six crore tonnes of foodgrains rotting in the godowns but we had people starving. Ultimately, so much money was spent - out of Rs. 25,000 Crores, about Rs. 7,000-Rs.8,000/- Crores was spent just to stock the grain. So, what did they do? They exported. About 15-20 million tonnes of grains was exported. At what price, Sir, It was exported at the BPL price. Why could you not give the same grain to the poor, instead of giving Rs.7,000-8,000 Crores to big traders as subsidy? If we had given the same subsidy to poor, would we not have saved so many lives, would we not have saved so many children from malnutrition and under-nourishment? So, that is a lesson, and that lesson has been very clearly stated in the Economic Survey

of 2004-05. It says, "carrying cost of foodgrains accounted for almost 20-25 per cent of food subsidy during 2001-02 and 2002-03. The decline in food stocks during 2003-04 and 2004-05 with implications for reduction in the carrying cost and the gradual decline in the disposal of subsidised foodgrains have resulted in a considerable deceleration in the growth of food subsidy during 2003-04." In fact, it is to the tune of about Rs.7,000-Rs.8,000 Crores. We are down to Rs. 15,000 - 16,000 Crores. But, in the name of subsidies, what is given. It is Rs.7.20 for a kilo of rice and around Rs.5.70 for a kilo of wheat. If you take all this together, at present, it is below one per cent of the entire GDP of this country. But what is the Government thinking? I have read only the documents, of the Finance Ministry, What they have said in the Budget Speech and what they are planning. Instead of understanding the lesson in terms of extent of hunger and needs of our people, what they are saying is इतना गड़बड़ है यह पी.डी.एस. कि पूरे पी.डी.एस. को ही खत्म कर लो। अभी फूड स्टॉप्स को ले लीजिए। फूड स्टॉप्स का मतलब क्या है? What is the international experience of food stamps? We have seen that not in a single developing country, food stamps have worked. Firstly, because in the context of inflation, naturally, the value of food stamp will go down. Secondly, in a country like India where there are so many remote areas, where is the shop which is going to sell the grain? How will there be any protection against that shopkeeper and trader from exploiting the poor person with the food coupon? It cannot work in India. And, it is going to lead to further disaster. So, my humble submission is that in the course of this debate I hope that this House can come to a unanimous understanding of the needs, the first and foremost, of our own people, not the conditions which are imposed on us, not the dictates which are given to us by those who do not know the very meaning of hunger. And, in that, what we are suggesting is this. If you look at the food subsidy, you will find that out of Rs.25,000 Crores, they are saving Rs.8,000 Crores. Give that subsidy. Don't cut it down, but shift it to the poor. We have made a rough calculation that if you take 70 per cent of households in India - - all households, APL, BPL everybody-- it will come to around - a very rough calculation- Rs.27,000 Crores. That is still one per cent of GDP. I feel that we are investing this expenditure in the future of this country, in the health of our people. And nothing can compare to the need for this. Therefore, in conclusion, all I would say is that I hope the Government will come out with a clear policy direction to strengthen the PDS, to make it universal at BPL prices and to give up this disastrous path of privatising the rights of the people of this country. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam, thank you for your fine maiden speech. Prof. R.B.S. Verma.

प्रो.रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश): माननीय सभापति जी, सब से पहले मैं आप को धन्यवाद देना चाहूंगा की आप ने मुझे इस महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर बोलने का अवसर दिया। श्रीमन, मैं कह सकता हूँ कि मैं इस क्षेत्र का कोई विशेषज्ञ नहीं हूँ, इसलिए मैं अपनी तरफ से कोई विशेष टिप्पणी इस विषय के संबंध में नहीं करना चाहूंगा। परंतु अपने प्रैक्टिकल एक्सपीरिंस के आधार पर मैं कुछ बातों को कुछ विशेष बिंदुओं के संदर्भ में रखना चाहूंगा।

मान्यवर, अभी मेरी विद्वान बहन वृंदा कारत ने अपना भाषण विश्व संस्था संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ के रिजोल्यूशन से प्रारंभ किया कि विश्व के प्रत्येक नागरिक को पर्याप्त भोजन मिलना चाहिए जिससे कि उस का स्वास्थ्य ठीक रहे और वह सही ढंग से काम कर सके। इस भावना को ध्यान में रखकर, इस रिजोल्यूशन को ध्यान में रखकर विश्व के तमाम राष्ट्रों ने अपनी योजनाएं संचालित की हैं। हमारे यहां भी यह योजना पी.डी.एस. के माध्यम से बहुत पहले से संचालित है और इस का उद्देश्य है कि राष्ट्र के प्रत्येक नागरिक को उचित दर पर भोजन उपलब्ध हो जाये। परंतु स्थिति जिस का चित्रण हमारी विद्वान बहन ने भी किया है, मैं समझता हूँ कि REALITY उसके कहीं नजदीक है, उस के आसपास है। कल संयोग से मैं एक कवि सम्मेलन में था और उस में एक लब्ध-प्रतिष्ठित कवि ने इस देश की भुखमरी का जो चित्रण किया, उसे सुनने के बाद यह प्रतीत हुआ कि वास्तव में इस देश में भुखमरी की स्थिति क्या है और पी.डी.एस. असफल हुआ है। उन्होंने अपने एक उद्धरण में कहा कि दो वर्ष के अन्वेषण के बाद मैं इस निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचा हूँ और उस दौरान मैं ने देश के विभिन्न भागों की यात्राएं की हैं व लोगों की स्थिति देखी है। उन्होंने बताया कि मैं कवि नहीं एक प्रोफेसर हूँ और एक यूनिवर्सिटी में लॉ पढ़ाता हूँ। उन्होंने यह भी बताया कि आज भी उड़ीसा के कुछ क्षेत्र ऐसे हैं जहां प्लेटफार्म पर ऐसे लड़के अक्सर खड़े मिल जाते हैं कि जब कोई आदमी भोजन करने के बाद अपना दौना या कुल्लड़ फेंकता है तो जिस तरह से कुत्ते झपटते हैं उसी तरह से बच्चे उन पर झपटने के लिए मजबूर हैं। उन्होंने अत्यंत ही दारुण दृश्य खींचा और कहा कि मैंने यह स्वयं देखा है। उन्होंने कहा कि इस देश में right to information तो बन गया है, यहां पर right to clean environment का प्रस्ताव भी है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने इस तरह के निर्णय किये हैं जिससे के environment clean हो, साफ सुथरा हो, लेकिन इस देश में अभी भी right to food का कानून नहीं बना है जिस से कि प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को पर्याप्त मात्रा में भोजन मिल सके। शायद हमारे Apex Court ने कहीं अपनी एकाध रूलिंग में कहा है कि हमारे संविधान में इस तरह का कोई प्रावधान नहीं है कि right to food का कोई कानून बनाया जाए या ऐसा निर्णय लिया जाय। मैं समझता हूँ कि यह बहुत बड़ी विसंगति है। महोदय, जब संविधान का निर्माण हुआ होगा तब बात अलग हो सकती है, लेकिन आज जिन के हाथ में यह देश है, उन्हें इस बारे में विचार करना चाहिए कि अगर right to information का कानून बन सकता है, right to clean environment का कानून बन सकता है तो right to food का कानून क्यों नहीं बन सकता है? इसलिए मैं समझता हूँ कि आज के जो विधान निर्माता हैं, उन सभी को मिलकर इस विषय पर विचार करना चाहिए।

श्री सभापति: Right to live with dignity तो है।

प्रो.रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा: Sir, right to food नहीं है। मान्यवर, प्रथम दृष्टि में पी.डी.एस. या टी.पी.डी.एस. के संबंध में भारत सरकार की जो व्यवस्था है, उसे देखने से ऐसा लगता है कि इस संबंध में कोई विशेष कानून नहीं है। लेकिन अगर इसको गहराई से देखा जाए, तो इसमें कई खामियां हैं। मान्यवर, जो चार्टर है, मॉडल चार्टर या सिटिजन चार्टर, इसमें लिखा हुआ है कि हमारे बी.पी.एल. का ग्रुप या बी.पी.एल. श्रेणी के जो लोग हैं, उन तक यह भोजन पहुंच सके, उचित कीमत पर पहुंच सके, जो **prescribed rate** हैं, उस पर पहुंच सके, इसके लिए उन्होंने जो चार्टर बनाया है, उसमें उन्होंने तमाम बातों का जिक्र किया है। जैसे कि "entitlement of the BPL families; fair/average quality of foodgrains; information regarding fair price shops; procedure for issue of ration cards; inspection and checking; right to information, vigilance and public participation" इस तरह का एक मॉडल चार्टर बनाया है। देश के लगभग सभी प्रदेशों ने और यूनियन टेरिटोरिज ने इस चार्टर को एडाप्ट किया है। लेकिन मान्यवर, देखने में आया है और जैसा कि मैंने कहा कि मेरी अपनी एक्सपेरिेंस है। देश के तमाम प्रदेशों की स्थिति तो मैं नहीं जानता, लेकिन मैं उत्तर प्रदेश के संदर्भ में कहना चाहता हूं कि विजिलेंस कमेटी, जिसका निर्माण ग्राम सभा के स्तर पर होना चाहिए, जिसका निर्माण ब्लॉक स्तर पर, डिस्ट्रिक्ट लेवल पर, स्टेट के स्तर पर होना चाहिए और जिस कमेटी में कार्ड होल्डर्स होने चाहिए, जिस कमेटी में उपभोक्ता क्षेत्र में काम करने वाले एक्टिविस्ट, कार्यकर्ताओं को होना चाहिए, जन प्रतिनिधि होने चाहिए, ऐसी कोई कमेटी कहीं एक्जिस्ट नहीं कर रही है और अगर कहीं कोई कमेटी एक्जिस्ट कर रही है, तो केवल पेपर पर कर रही है। ये जो मॉडल सिटिजन चार्टर्स हैं, इनमें इन तमाम बातों का जिक्र तो किया गया है, लेकिन कोई अनुश्रवण का जिक्र कहीं नहीं किया गया है। मान्यवर, मेरी अपनी मान्यता है कि स्कीम कितनी भी अच्छी क्यों न हो, कितनी भी अच्छी प्लानिंग क्यों न हो, अगर उसमें अनुश्रवण का एलीमेंट, उसमें मॉनिटरिंग की कोई उचित व्यवस्था नहीं है, तो वह स्कीम सफल नहीं हो सकती है।

मान्यवर, इसमें **involvement of Panchayati Raj institution** का जिक्र तो अवश्य है और इसमें कहा गया है कि जो ग्राम पंचायतें हैं, उनको यह अधिकार होगा कि वे फेयर प्राइस शॉप्स का इन्स्पेक्शन करें, उनके राशन कार्ड्स देखें, उसका डिस्प्ले ठीक से हो रहा है कि नहीं हो रहा है, इसको देखें। लेकिन इस तरह की व्यवस्था कहीं चल नहीं रही है। मैंने कहा कि पहली नज़र में अगर देखें तो गवर्नमेंट के फॉर्मूलेशन में कहीं कोई कमी नहीं लगती है, लेकिन आप कितनी भी बढिया स्कीम क्यों न बना लें, कितना भी फूड ग्रेन्स यहां से आप क्यों न भेज दें, लेकिन अगर उसका वितरण ही नहीं हो रहा है और उस वितरण की मॉनिटरिंग नहीं है तो वह योजना कभी सफल नहीं हो सकती है और यही स्थिति है।

मैं इस सरकार की बात नहीं कर रहा हूं। इसके पहले वाली सरकार के माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी ने कहा था कि इस देश में भोजन की कोई कमी नहीं है, फूड ग्रेन्स की कोई कमी नहीं है, सब फूड ग्रेन्स हमारे पास सरप्लस हैं, जिनी डिमांड है, उतना फूड ग्रेन्स दिया जा सकता है। इसके बावजूद खबरें आती हैं कि लोग भुखमरी से मर रहे हैं। इसका कारण क्या है? यह सरकार हो या आगे आने वाली सरकार हो या इसके पहले की सरकारें हों मैं उनकी मंशा में कोई कमी नहीं समझता, लेकिन कहीं-न-कहीं इनके क्रियान्वयन में निश्चित रूप से कमी है, कुछ-न-कुछ **loopholes** हैं, जिन्हें **plug** करने की आवश्यकता है। जब उन्हें प्लग नहीं किया

जाएगा, मैं नहीं समझता हूँ कि इस आन्दोलन को हम मजबूत कर सकते हैं और जो लोग हैं, जो भूख से मर रहे हैं, उन तक हम पर्याप्त मात्रा में भोजन पहुंचा सकते हैं। क्या ऐसा नहीं किया जा सकता है कि हम इसे मैनडेटरी बना दें। अगर राज्य सरकारों के लिए **vigilance committees**, सतर्कता समितियाँ बनाना मैनडेटरी हो जाए तो मैं समझता हूँ कि एक सीमा तक इसको ठीक से कार्यान्वित किया जा सकता है। इसी तरह से इसका जो अनुश्रवण है, मोनितरिंग है, यह भी अगर मैनडेटरी जो जाए और इसके लिए कोई विशेष अधिकारी नियुक्त हो जाए। मान्यवर, यह मैं इसलिए कह रहा हूँ कि अभी विगत दिनों में, कुछ दिन पहले एक बहुत अच्छे कानून का एनेक्टमेंट हुआ है। ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में एम्प्लायमेंट गारंटी स्कीम के लिए अभी कुछ दिन पहले इस कानून का एनेक्टमेंट हुआ है। और उस योजना के पेरालल एक योजना यह भी है। इस योजना में अगर इस तरह की खामियाँ हैं, तो मुझे भय है, मुझे डर है कि एंप्लायमेंट गारंटी योजना, चाहे कितनी अच्छी भावना के साथ वह कानून बनाया गया हो, उसका भी फैल्योर होना सुनिश्चित है। अगर उसकी प्रोपर मोनेटरिंग नहीं होगी, उसमें मोनेटरिंग की कोई व्यवस्था मॅडेटरी नहीं होगी, विजलेंस कमेटियों का केवल जिक्र होगा, उनके निर्माण के लिए कोई मॅडेटरी प्रावधान नहीं होगा, तो मैं नहीं समझता कि यह योजना सफल हो सकती है।

मान्यवर, भारत सरकार का एक ऑर्डर है पी.डी.एस. (कंट्रोल) ऑर्डर — 2001, इस आर्डर में कहा गया है **In order to maintain supplies and secure availability and distribution of essential commodities, Public Distribution System (Control) Order 2001 has been notified on August 31, 2001. The order mainly contains provisions with regard to the following issues: -**

- (i) Identification of families below the poverty line;
- (ii) Ration cards;
- (iii) Scale and Issue price;
- (iv) Distribution of foodgrains;
- (v) Licensing; and
- (vi) Monitoring.

मान्यवर, इसी ऑर्डर में इस बात का जिक्र है कि इसका वाएलेशन जो है **that is criminal loyalty**. अगर किसी भी स्तर पर कोई भी इसका वाएलेशन करेगा, तो उसके खिलाफ असेन्सियल कमोडिटीज एक्ट के अंतर्गत मुकदमा कायम हो सकता है, उसके खिलाफ कार्रवाई हो सकती है। लेकिन, मान्यवर, प्रैक्टिकल में यह देखा गया है कि यह जो असेन्सियल कमोडिटीज एक्ट है, इस एक्ट के अंतर्गत कभी भी किसी भी अधिकारी के खिलाफ कोई मुकदमा कायम नहीं हुआ है, अगर मुकदमा कायम हुआ है तो किसी छोटे-मोटे व्यक्ति को फांस दिया गया। छोटी मछलियाँ जरूर फंसी हैं, लेकिन यहां 8000 करोड़ रुपए की सबसिडी दी जा रही है, उसमें हजारों करोड़ रुपया तो ये बड़े अधिकारी इन कोटे वालों से मिलकर के या थोक विक्रेताओं से मिलकर के डकार जाते हैं और छोटे-मोटे लोगों का उसमें चालान हो जाता है। इस कानून का

उपयोग कभी भी किसी अधिकारी के खिलाफ नहीं हुआ है, कम से कम उत्तर प्रदेश में तो मैंने नहीं देखा है कि कभी कोई अधिकारी इस असेन्सियल क्मोडिटीज एक्ट की वजह से गया हो।

मान्यवर, मुझे मालूम है, मैं जानता हूँ, मेरे अपने क्षेत्र में, जहाँ का मैं रहने वाला हूँ, चाहे अंत्योदय अन्न योजना का मामला हो, चाहे बी.पी.एल. का मामला हो, ये बड़े-बड़े जो माफिया लोग हो गए हैं, थोक में उनके यहाँ अन्न चला जाता है, उनके गोदामों में चला जाता है और रात में ट्रकों के द्वारा बड़े बड़े बाजारों में चला जाता है। आज तक मैंने नहीं देखा कि किसी एसडीएम ने उनको पकड़ा हो, उनका चालान किया हो, छोटे-मोटे कोटे वाले तो पकड़े गए हैं। इसलिए मैं कह रहा हूँ कि नीयत भारत सरकार की चाहे कितनी अच्छी हो और नीयत अच्छी है यह मैं मानता हूँ, लेकिन इन लूप-होल्स को प्लग करने की आवश्यकता है। जब तक ये लूप-होल्स प्लग नहीं होंगे, तब तक मैं नहीं समझता कि आपकी मंशा के अनुसार इस देश का गरीबतम व्यक्ति, जो वास्तव में नीडी है, जिसे भोजन की आवश्यकता है, उस तक भोजन पहुंच पाएगा।

मान्यवर, इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं आज की सरकार से अनुरोध करूंगा कि जो आज तक का पिछली सरकारों का अनुभव है और जो विभिन्न राज्यों से आपको अनुभव मिला है, यह उपभोक्ता आंदोलन जो काफी मात्रा में महाराष्ट्र में, दक्षिण भारत के राज्यों में सफल है, उस अनुभव का फायदा उठाकर इस उपभोक्ता आंदोलन को पूरे राष्ट्र में मजबूत करने के लिए एक प्रयास करिए। अगर उपभोक्ता आंदोलन मजबूत हो जाए, इन विजलेंस कमेटियों का वास्तव में गठन हो जाए, मोनेटरिंग कमेटी मेंडेटरी हो जाए और राज्य स्तर पर जो फूडग्रेन्स हम देते हैं, क्योंकि कई बार कहा जाता है कि हमारा फेडरल स्ट्रक्चर है, हमारा काम है कि राज्य सरकार ने जितनी मांग की है, उनको उतना फूडग्रेन्स दे दें, मैं समझता हूँ कि इतना कह देने से सरकार का काम पूरा नहीं हो जाता है, राज्य सरकार और केन्द्र सरकार, दोनों मिलकर देखें कि नीडी व्यक्ति तक भोजन कैसे पहुंच सकता है।

आपके स्तर पर अगर काम ठीक हो गया है, लेकिन राज्य सरकार के स्तर पर वांछित कदम नहीं उठाए गए हैं, तो आपको उन्हें प्रेरित करने की आवश्यकता है, विशेषकर उन राज्यों में, जैसे उड़ीसा का जिक्र बार बार आता है, जिन्हें बीमारू राज्य कहते हैं - बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश, महाराष्ट्र और राजस्थान हालांकि इन बीमारू राज्यों में से राजस्थान अब धीरे-धीरे निकल रहा है। राजस्थान में कुछ बेहतर काम हो रहा है, कुछ पहले से हुआ है, मैं यह नहीं कह रहा हूँ कि वर्तमान सरकार के समय में ही काम हुआ है, लेकिन इस तरह की जो स्टेट्स हैं, जहाँ की स्थिति वास्तव में नियंत्रण के बाहर होती जा रही है, उन राज्य सरकारों के साथ मिलकर विचार-विमर्श करने की आवश्यकता है, जिससे कि आपकी जो मंशा है और हमारी विश्व संस्था-संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ - की जो मान्यता है, उस मान्यता के अनुसार उस भावना के अनुसार प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को फूड सिक्युरिटी मिल सके।

इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ। धन्यवाद।

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR (Karnataka): Thank you Mr. Chairman, Sir. The Public Distribution System is a very important subject. I pray the Government may strengthen this system. Sir, food is the main thing for the survival of a man. Food is a must for human beings as well as animals,

birds, reptiles and all other living creatures. Anything can be stopped, but hunger cannot be. For example, even if there is a dead body in the house, people, who are hungry, go inside the house, eat something and come out. That is what hunger is. Even when a tigress gives birth to her cubs, the first thing she does is she eats the first baby. Even a cat, after giving birth to a kitten, she also eats the first baby. It is sure that hunger is a very important thing, for पेट का सवाल सबसे बड़ा सवाल है, इससे हम इन्कार नहीं कर सकते। इसीलिए, we have to give more importance to the PDS. Sir, the PDS is a joint juncture between the Centre and the States. The Centre is meant for procurement, storage, transportation and other things. But, the responsibility of distribution is on the States. So, the FCI does the work of procurement, transportation and such other things and the States look after the distribution. Sir, we are proud to say that there is no dearth of food in our country now. All our godowns are full of foodgrains. Now, there is a dearth of godowns to keep the food. Anybody may say that so many people are dying in India because of hunger. But, Sir, I think, we should not agree to it because there is plenty of food for our poor people. The Government has taken so much of trouble and gives subsidy on these foodgrains that where we get the rice for Rs. 3 per kg, our Government is giving Rs. 5 more for that and for wheat, that is for Rs. 2 per kg, the Government is paying Rs. 4 for that. So, this type of foodgrains, which we are giving, are most essential for the BPL, and the Government is taking care of that.

Sir, there was a time when we used to import foodgrains from America, and we used to eat the things which even the animals in foreign countries refused to eat. Our people used to eat PL-480, a type of Jawar and wheat. Now, after the Green Revolution in our country, we are in a position to export foodgrains.

Sir, we have three categories in our country. One is APL (Above the Poverty Line); second is BPL (Below the Poverty Line); and there is another category, which is below the BPL, that is, the people who are very, very poor. So, the APL category comprises people who don't purchase anything from ration shops; they don't use ration cards. They keep it in their house and use it for the sake of getting LPG connection, and while purchasing car or any other vehicle or any such thing, they require ration card as proof. That is why they keep ration cards in their house and don't use it. The quota that is allotted to these people is simply taken away by ration shops. And, in that, our Government loses about Rs.1600 crore. In

3.00 P.M.

fair price shops, the same rice, which is worth Rs.3 per Kg., is sold by the shopkeepers for about Rs.12 per Kg. Because the stock which remains there, which APL people don't take, is sold by the shopkeepers in the black market. But, now-a-days, the people who are living Below the Poverty Line are getting plenty of foodgrains. Even in Karnataka, they are getting about 28 Kgs. of Rice and wheat, and they are getting kerosene also.

Sir, as I have just now said, Rs.26,000 crore of Government subsidy is there. It cost the Government Rs.26,000 crore. We say that the Government is not doing anything for us. But we have to think that the rice which we get for Rs.3 per Kg., the Government pays Rs.5 for that. For wheat also, the Government has to pay something. In all, the Government is paying Rs.26,000 Crores for that. Because of the APL people, Rs. 16,000 crore is a loss to the Government. According to one 1997 survey, the total number of people living Below the Poverty Line is 596.20 lakhs. But, today, it is said that it is 652.3 Crores. Sir, that means, six-and-a-half crore people are living Below the Poverty Line. I don't agree with this. We always say that ours is a poor country, and 80 per cent of the people are poor. When 80 per cent of the people are poor, then how can there be only six-and-a-half crore people in the BPL? You can say that 60 per cent of the people are poor in the country. How is it like that? It shows that the survey is not done properly. That is why it is like that. The survey should be done properly. It is said that if a family is having a T.V., then they cannot be considered as people living Below the Poverty Line. If a family owns a two-wheeler, then it cannot be considered as people living Below the Poverty Line. If a family has a phone, then it will not be considered as people living Below the Poverty Line. But, now-a-days, these things have become a necessity. Having a two-wheeler in the house for young children going to work place, school or college is nothing. Two-wheeler is nothing. There should be a vehicle for the children. That is why people keep vehicle. Phone has also become a necessity nowadays. We see how the mobile phones are used nowadays. So, if on account of having a mobile or having a two-wheeler, a family is rejected from BPL group, how would it be possible? We have to think like that.

Secondly, Sir, about the ration cards. It is said that if there is a house, there is a ration card and if there is a ration card, they can go to the shop. जिसके पास घर नहीं है, उसके पास कार्ड नहीं है, जिसके पास कार्ड नहीं है, उसको राशन नहीं है। So, how many people in our country own houses? How many

people are staying on the footpath? How much floating population is there? In a place like Mumbai, daily five thousand people come and go. So many people are cooking on footpath. So many people are cooking in gardens and something like that. They don't have a house and because they don't have a house, they are not given a card and if a card is not given, they are not given ration.

I will tell you one more thing. Sir, in big cities like Mumbai or Bangalore, they construct huge buildings wherein 100 to 500 workers work and they stay around that building for one year or two. What about them? They are not given ration cards. How would they manage? Why not give them the temporary ration cards? Why not that responsibility should be given to the person who is constructing such a big building? Why should we give a licence to a person who is constructing such building unless he provides temporary ration cards to those who are working there? There are people who are constructing roads. What about those people? They are also without cards and this is how the BPL people are not recognised. Everyday, they have to go to the shop in the evening, they have to buy one kilogram of rice, pay Rs. 12 and bring it, cook it, eat it and sleep. This is the life and this is why the number of BPL cards is less. So, we have to think of this floating population and we have to think of the people working at construction places also.

Then, Sir, I have to say something about kerosene. I tell you, Sir, that kerosene is very necessary for poor people. Kerosene is given. But only 12 litres of kerosene is given to a BPL family.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DATTA MEGHE) in the Chair]

If there is one cylinder, they are given six litres; If 12 litres of kerosene are given to a poor family, how would a housewife manage in 12 litres for one month? Sir, just imagine, in a poor family, how much a housewife has to cook? Definitely, they require at least one kilogram of rice, half kilogram of *Dal* should be cooked for morning. They do not eat other things like fruits, biscuits, etc. That is why the quantity of food that is cooked in their houses is much more than what APL people cook. Why not give them more kerosene? Twelve litres of kerosene is finished within eight days. What the people have to do for the rest of the three weeks? Why the Government is not giving them more kerosene? If more kerosene is given to a poor family, what misuse will they do? Can a mother, instead of milk, give a glass of kerosene to her child to drink and say, "Drink it and go

to school"? No. Is it not? Why don't you give them more kerosene? How can a woman cook for 30 days with 12 litres of kerosene? That is the thing which a woman can only understand. The husband of the House knows only to eat...(*Interruptions*)... They are cooking, but they are not going to stand in a line throughout the day to bring kerosene. In the morning, she has to look after the husband; the husband drinks in the night; he comes like a lord, he beats the wife, he eats whatever is there, he throws out the vessels, he does not care for the children, he sleeps like a lord, and early morning, the wife has to give him hot water for bath. I am not talking about Mr. Jairam Ramesh or Mr. B.K. Hariprasad. They are all APL people. All my colleagues, who are sitting here, really, they do not know what poverty is. They think that eating *pista, baddam, chamcham, biscuits and dhokla* here, and tandoori chicken in the Central Hall, that is the life. That is not the real life. If you want to think about the poor people, you have to go to a hut and see what the condition of the Indian woman is, what she has to do, how much she has to toil. She has to work outside, at the same time, she has to work inside the house also. She has to please the husband. We are not the American ladies to leave the husband and go and get married to another man. I will give you my example. I went to America. The ladies over there asked me: "How many years of married life do you have?" I said: "I have forty years of married life." Then they said: "Is it? What this red you have put on the forehead?" I said: "This is the sign of marriage." They said: "Oh, my God. We do not have a marriage, and we do not have a red sign." They said like that. They said: "You have forty years of your married life. Then, how many husbands did you have in forty years? How many marriages did you have?" I said: "Only one marriage. We are Indians. We marry only one man, and in my mind, I said, we are tired of even one man..."(*Interruptions*)... This official or unofficial business is with you people. A few ladies might do something, but generally, it is not so. "We do not go for divorce. We stick on to one husband, whether he is good or bad, whatever it is, we are not there to leave the husband. It is our culture. We do not do that. That is what it is. It is like that." We, Indian women, have to suffer. We are suffering, and if we have to fight for kerosene also, what is our life? ...(*Interruptions*)... Daughter-in-laws are not burnt these days. Daughter-in-laws now-a-days have become more stronger than the mother-in-law. That is why I request the Government to supply these things. We should think about the necessity of a thing. We are not asking for very luxurious things like that. Don't think about these TV serials. Now-a-days, we are seeing in these serials a very luxurious life, with very bright sarees,

plenty of jewellery, mercedes benz cars, marrying brother-in-law and mother-in-law killing the daughter in laws. All these things are not in our culture. Ours is a poor country. We are BPL, more than 60 per cent of people in our country are poor people, and the Government is taking care of us. I still want that the Government should strengthen the PDS. They must take care of all these things, and these poor people should be given temporary ration cards. Otherwise, what happens? If there is no house, they have no ration card, and those who are having ration cards, rich people, they are keeping it in their cupboards simply, and those who really need ration cards, they are not given ration cards. Unnecessarily, a thousand and one questions are put to them; whether you have got a two-wheeler; whether you have got a TV; whether you have got five sarees etc. What is this nonsense? I tell you one example. Yesterday, I asked my servant, who is working in my house, "What type of card are you having?" In Karnataka, they have given yellow cards and ordinary cards. Yellow cards are meant for the BPL people. She said, "हमारे लिए कोई कार्ड नहीं है, हमें ऐसा कोई कार्ड नहीं दिया गया है। हमारे पास एक ही कार्ड है — ऐसा उसने कहा।" मैंने पूछा, "उस कार्ड में क्या मिलता है?" बोली — दस किलो चावल मिलता है और हल्दी कार्ड में पच्चीस तीस किलो मिलता है। So, why not give all these types of cards to poor people, who are really poor and those who cannot afford to go to the market and buy the same rice which are sold in ration shops at Rs. 12/-? They have to go every day to the ration shops. They have to bring it every day. Sir, they have to cook and eat only after bringing it from the market every day. This is the condition of the poor people living in our country, and especially of our women. They are in bad shape. Indian women are in bad shape because they have to face many difficulties in life. They have to look after their houses, they have to work, they have to take care of their husbands, and they have to also take care of their children. At the same time, if the ration is also not given to them properly, they are put to more trouble. So, please think of all these things in a broad way. Let the Government take care of these PDS shops and let it also take care of women living in India. Thank you very much, Sir.

श्रीमती जमना देवी बारुपाल (राजस्थान): सर, इन्होंने जो कहा, मैं पूरे दिल से इनका समर्थन करती हूँ कि इन्होंने ... (व्यवधान) ...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री दत्ता मेघे): मैडम, आपका नाम ... (व्यवधान) ...

श्रीमती जमना देवी बारुपाल: गरीबी की रेखा से नीचे जीवनयापन करने वाले जीवन का बड़ा विस्तारपूर्वक विश्लेषण इन्होंने किया है, इसलिए मैं इनका धन्यवाद करती हूँ।

'SHRI S. ANBALAGAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I wish to make a few points on the Public Distribution System on behalf of AIADMK. When we talk about PDS, we are compelled to think of the year 1997. Because, it was in this year that the Targeted Public Distribution System, known as TPDS, came into existence. The aim of this TPDS was to reach essential commodities to the poor people in the country, particularly in the rural areas. But I am sorry to say that Tamil Nadu has suffered because of this scheme.

Sir, Tamil Nadu is one of the well performing States and it has implemented population control and poverty eradication programmes with great success. But Tamil Nadu has not been benefited from this scheme because of the components necessary for getting assistance from this scheme. That is why this TPDS has not achieved the desired result.

Under TPDS the beneficiaries are categorised as BPL and APL and essential commodities are supplied to the States from Central pool on the basis of BPL population. As Tamil Nadu has done well in eradicating poverty, it gets less quantity of essential commodities under subsidised rate. In fact, the universal PDS is functioning so well in Tamil Nadu that the State is seen as a model in this regard. The success is because of three factors namely availability, accessibility and affordability. That is, essential commodities such as rice, wheat and kerosene should be made available and they should be available at places easily accessible by the public and the price of commodities should be affordable by common man. I am happy to say that Tamil Nadu has set an example in successful implementation of universal PDS.

Sir, now I come to Central pool allocation to Tamil Nadu. As regards allocation of rice, the monthly requirement to Tamil Nadu is 3 lakh tons. Of this, 51,678 tons at the rate of 3 rupees a kilo under AAY scheme, 1,18,520 tons of rice at the rate of Rs. 5.65 and the balance of 1,29,802 tons of rice at the rate of Rs. 8.30 are given to the Tamil Nadu. But Tamil Nadu is providing rice at the *rate* of Rs.3.50 per kg to all the cardholders without categorisation. Tamil Nadu Government buys rice at the rate of Rs. 8.30 per kilo and distributes it at the rate of Rs. 3.50 under the Universal PDS. This results in an additional expenditure of Rs. 1400 crore annually. So, I appeal to the hon'ble Minister that this amount of Rs. 1400 crore should be

* English Translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

given to Tamil Nadu as grant. If this is not possible for any reason, 3 lakh tons of rice should be given at the rate of Rs.-3.50 per kilo for universal PDS in Tamil Nadu.

In Tamil Nadu, most people eat boiled rice. Keeping this in mind, Tamil Nadu Government demands boiled and raw rice in the proportion of 80:20. But Tamil Nadu mostly gets less boiled rice. The movement of boiled rice from Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh to Tamil Nadu should be increased.

Now I come to sugar. The situation here is also the same. The monthly allocation of sugar from Central pool has come down to 10,830 tons from 23,750 tons. I request the hon'ble Minister to allocate 28,000 tons of sugar monthly to Tamil Nadu.

Now I come to kerosene. For 1 crore 89 lakh cardholder, the requirement of kerosene is 1 lakh 210 kilo litres a month. But the centre gives only 59,852 kilo litres each month. I appeal to the hon'ble Minister to increase this allocation to match the demand.

Sir, now I come to an important point. Tamil Nadu has suffered badly by the recent rains and floods. In the 22 worst affected districts, there are 1 crore 44 lakh family cards. All these cardholders have to be given kerosene at 3 litre per card and it comes to 43,200 kilo litres. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has written a letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister to give the required kerosene to Tamil Nadu. I hope the Hon'ble Prime Minister will consider this favourably and release kerosene. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has directed supply of kerosene to the affected people from the existing stock. So, allocation of kerosene needs urgent attention.

Sir, the Government claims that godowns overflow with foodgrains. If it is so, there is no need to categorise beneficiaries as BPL and APL. Instead of TPDS, Universal PDS should be implemented as in Tamil Nadu. Then alone Tamil Nadu will get its due share and the people will be benefited. I thank you once again, Sir, for giving me this opportunity.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir,

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Andhra Pradesh): Speak in Telugu.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: There is no Interpreter for Telugu language.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, there is no Interpreter for Telugu language.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Sir, this is a very vital subject so far as poor people, both in rural and urban areas of the country are concerned. The Targeted Public Distribution System was introduced in the year 1997, as the earlier system of PDS did not deliver adequately to the poor people at the national level. There are four types of beneficiaries under the Targeted Public Distribution System, i.e. Below Poverty Line (BPL); Above Poverty Line (APL); Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Annapurna. Sir, more than 40 per cent of the population lives under BPL and the present systems of both the Central Government and the State Government have not, at all, been helpful to the targeted people. The whole system needs a total revamp. We are, on the one hand, saying that all our godowns are full, but, on the other hand, hunger deaths are still taking place in the country. According to a survey report, thousands of people die of hunger everyday and nearly 75 per cent of them are women and children. More than 4.62 lakh Fair Price Shops are there in the country. This huge network can play a more meaningful role if it ensures the availability of food to the poor households.

We need to have a re-look at the whole system. Sir, the Food-for-Work Programme and the Mid-Day-Meals Scheme are somewhat helpful to the people. I would like to inform the august House that the Rs. 2/-per kilogram rice scheme for the poor people which was started by our Government under the leadership of Dr. N.T. Rama Rao, in 1993 in Andhra Pradesh, is a revolutionary scheme. Then subsidy-for-rice scheme in Andhra Pradesh is also a successful scheme and at present it needs further improvement. Apart from rice, wheat and kerosene, we used to distribute sugar to the PDS cardholders. The distribution of kerosene is not up to the mark; there are many instances when it was diverted, and the sufferers are the poor people who live in rural areas. Sir, the kerosene is used for lighting purpose apart from cooking purpose. Thousands of villages are not yet electrified, and there are frequent power cuts in the rural areas.

The PDS Control Order, 2001, was notified on 31.8.2001. The order mainly contains provisions with regard to issues pertaining to (i) identification of families below the poverty line; (ii) ration cards, (iii) sale and issue price;

(iv) distribution of foodgrains; (v) licensing; and (vi) monitoring. But I request the Government to have a thorough review of the whole system in the light of the PDS Control Order, 2001. The PDS covers 6.5 crore families living below-the-poverty line whereas the States have identified 8.7 crore BPL families. Now the coverage has to be enlarged. I would like to know whether the Ministry is willing to extend the coverage.

A programme evaluation study by the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution suggests that the Government should do away with the methodology of identifying poor families on the basis of income/expenditure criterion. This is because identifying sources of income at the household level and measuring them with precisions on such a large scale is problematic and leads to imperfect information. And, the Organisation asked the Planning Commission to devise an appropriate criterion and method of BPL identification that would enable States to limit the size of the target group in the neighbourhood with its own estimates of people with food insecurity. What is the thinking of the Government on this aspect? The study also suggested that the full quota of foodgrains for distribution must reach the retail outlets within the first seven days of the month for which door step delivery of grains by Government agencies is required. The study also revealed that about 58 per cent of the subsidized foodgrain issued from the Central pool does not reach the BPL families because of identification errors, non-transparent operation and unethical practices in the implementation of the TDPS. If this is the situation, what are the measures taken to help the poor and needy people?

Sir, I am told that for one rupee worth of income transfer to the poor, the Government spends Rs.3.65; this indicates that one rupee of budgetary consumer subsidy is worth only 27 paise to the poor. Hence I request the Government to come out with a comprehensive distribution system.

Then, Sir, we all know the problems being faced by people every year on account of onion prices. I would suggest that this should also be brought under the purview of the PDS since people are not in a position to buy it in the open market.

Finally, I request the Government to ensure proper identification of beneficiaries under various scheme with the help of local Government by involving Panchayat raj institutions and evolve a fool-proof mechanism for distribution of foodgrains, kerosene, etc. through TDPS.

DR. M.S. GILL (Punjab): Sir, I have listened with great attention to the debates so far. The main speakers happen to be ladies -- firstly, my friend, Shrimati Brinda Karat spoke on the subject; I have no difficulty in agreeing with most of what she is arguing. Then, I heard my friend from Karnataka; I totally share her passion and anger. Now, my friend from Andhra Pradesh has spoken on the subject. And, I think, the reason is very simple, that the PDS historically has come about, because of an absolute necessity, which people, on this side or that side of the House cannot ignore, and that is the poverty of India. Yes; a segment of our population are very rich, remarkably rich. But the vast profile of India is of the poor and the hunger. I totally understood what was being said because, you see me dressed like this, but this is a camouflage, to pretend that I am like you and equal to you. I really remain a villager from Taran Taran. And my emotion is very much there. And Taran Taran does not mean Taran Taran; it means every village in India. I have seen the remotest Barmer. I have seen the remotest Orissa. I went with Mr. Narasimha Rao. I was Secretary, Agriculture and, believe me, the poverty I have seen there, and the lack of even muslin clothing on men and women, I cannot imagine; I am shaken even today - Kalahandi and other places; and almost all of Orissa. You see, heart disease is a disease of riches. Do you ever see a man like this down in any village? Their stomach is concave, not convex. That is India. And I sadly also feel, that it is going to remain so in the next fifty years, when you and I, will not be here. Yes, much progress will be made. There will be all the growth rates. But they will still not carry us over. And look at America! They have enough of poverty. All the learned men here know it. My friend Shourie is sitting here. He is an economist. He reads and writes enough. He might agree America is neglectful of the poor. I hope this country will never be heartless, and lose its cultural moorings, and not care. Therefore, the PDS is a very fundamental thing to discuss. But looking at it, and I have spent a lifetime on the other side, on, what you pejoratively, always sadly, call "bureaucrats", never public servants, They are bureaucrats, and every party is very happy to give them a little bit of a kick. It is wrong. But leave that aside. I have spent time there, and I am happy and proud that I did. And I have seen the PDS, not in the Punjab; even Punjab gets some wheat to distribute in the cities. One is not sure whether they need it. But, certainly, I have watched it and I have sat in every meeting. And, yes, it is true, the PDS has leakages, the PDS has wastages, the PDS has inefficiencies. The grain rots. What you put in the Punjab warehouses or wherever, the bottom bags, they all rot away and

turn black. All that happens, and all of us know it. I do not need to go on repeating it. All that happens. The business of the FCI! I have seen every Government saying, "Break it up. Abolish it. Smash it. Divide it up into zones". Some very clever economists even trying to say, "Let the States procure and distribute; we will give them some cash". Of course, you won't give them cash. That is a clever backdoor way for Finance Ministers of finishing the PDS. I have no doubt about it. When you do that, then you finish it. Then your responsibility हमने हाथ धो दिये, and that is the route sometimes, perhaps, I see people wanting to take.

But the trouble is, you cannot do without the PDS. I don't know the figures. But I read the figures, and something like 26 or 30 thousand crores is the subsidy on distributing it. And all, Planning Commission and Finance Ministers, want to abolish it! I can understand their reasons. But what are you going to do, with the people the lady here has described, and Brinda has described, or, any of us has seen? I sometimes say that our Prime Minister comes from a very poor village, even in the Punjab. That is really the poorest of the poor -- the salt mountains of west Punjab where he was born. But I wish he would request his Finance Minister, and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, to take ten days off, not go to Bombay, not go to Kolkata, not go to Washington and go and spend a little time in Kalahandi and Barmer, and simply take a tour of India like Gandhi had. Why don't they take a tour of real India where real India, lives and is going to go on living? And how are you going to take this ration away from them? And, therefore, the PDS, with every inefficiency, I am clear, should remain. That does not mean that you abolish, it for the sins of those, who cannot regulate it, and the big men who grab the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of wheat and, ट्रक इधर ले गए, उधर ले गए। Well, those management flaws are here in Delhi, or, wherever they are. They are not with the man in Barmer. उसको तो मिलना चाहिए। And we can make it better, We are supposed to make it better. So, I don't buy that preposition. I don't buy these food stamps also. I know about stamps. I have seen enough of the West. Are you going to give stamps in Kalahandi or in Barmer? कभी आप उन लोगों से मिले तो हैं ! And, they are going to take it to the local *Tetwala* who sells them half-a-bottle of kerosene at double price, and he is going to start this new economy; you see, we have all turned SENSEX people now. ...*(Interruptions)*... नहीं ...*(व्यवधान)*... इधर आने की जरूरत नहीं है। देखिए, आप तो सीपीएम हैं। जब मैंने पिछली दफा बोला था, तो कहा था कि मैं तो नक्सलाइट हूँ। गुरु गोविन्द सिंह क्या थे? "इन्हीं की कृपा के सजे हम हैं, नहीं मो सो गरीब करोड़ पड़े ।" That is what he said. So, the socialism, as Toyanbee wrote, was put by Guru Gobind

Singh long before Marx was born -- in 1700. वे बातें छिड़िए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... नहीं, नहीं। अहलुवालिया जी, छोड़िये। मैं उनसे टकराव नहीं करूंगा। Look at his weight and look at my weight. वे मुझे मार देंगे।

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand) : I also endorse that. "इन्हीं की कृपा के सजे हम हैं, नहीं तो सो गरीब करोड़ पड़े" He fought for the oppressed and the depressed and the *dalit* people of the country.

DR. M.S. GILL: So, this is the view. I have no problem sitting here or there. I don't mind all that. It is okay. Therefore, the stamp business will not work either. I mean, you have got to see the reality of India. Take kerosene. I was interested in what the lady Member said. She is absolutely right. First, the women tun around, stand in a queue; buy a bottle; even the ration bottle takes them weeks and days; or, they send their daughter of ten or fifteen years, to stand there the whole day, to bring that bottle; And to buy it in the black. Again the problem is -- and my friend Arun knows it; all of you know it -- that the kerosene is leaked out of all our public sector corporations or the petrol pumps, and it is diluted, I think, into the diesel, and these little people are cheated in Barmer, or, wherever they might be. Therefore, we should reduce it, or, block it, or, do something. ...*(Interruptions)*...

Where are the forests? I believe you won't have, wood to burn your dead. You already don't. The rich can. The poor can't. So, where are you going to find the wood? How do they cook the food? Therefore, my preposition is very clear. The poor will stay in this country for decades to come, whatever the growth rate anybody achieves. Therefore, the PDS will have to be there in some form; the people will have to be fed if they don't have the income. Yes, they talk about the surpluses, because the poor have no purchasing power. That is another story. I won't go into it. But, whatever the way, or, whatever the reason, the fact is that you will have to feed them, सामने भरता तो नहीं देखोगे, बात तो इतनी है। That is my preposition on this PDS. Please take care of whatever the flaws may be or, whatever system you make. But, don't indirectly slide away from what I just said, feed the people-all of them.

Now, I want to come to the other side, where I come from. All this PDS would not happen, but for what happened in the Punjab, and in areas round about it. This too, I request you, should not forget; you tend to forget it. ...*(Interruptions)*... No it is not a question of Amritsar, Mr. Jairam. Now, don't rag me because I can also rag you. अमृतसर है, तो बंगलुरु भी है।

इन बातों को छोड़िए। Let me just quietly say what I want to say. PL-480 used to come. I was also around. Eisenhower's wheat ship came, and we were independent. Then, I say about the sixties, Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. C. Subramanian, the seed was brought. Punjab was the only State in 1966 - I have written a book on all this -- the only State in 1966 which took the risk of taking the whole ship, of new wheat seed when other big States refused it--who did not take the risk कि अगर नहीं उगा, तो क्या करेंगे? and the next year, in 1967, we shut every school, every primary school in order to store wheat. Then it carried on and on, and all of you know the story. If we are independent of America, Argentina and everybody else, it is the Green Revolution. With great respect, I have to say that it is essentially a Punjab Revolution. 60 per cent of your surplus even today-it used to be 70 per cent in the old Punjab with the neighbouring Haryana; हरियाणा और पंजाब एक ही है, कोई झगड़ा नहीं है। आप लोग थोड़ा बहुत करा दें, तो करा दें। हम नहीं लड़ते हैं। We work in the same Secretariat. India does not know it. On one floor Mr. Hooda is sitting and on the other floor our Chief Minister is sitting. And the Secys. are mixed up in rooms. So, that is some other reality. Haryana, Punjab, some districts of northern Rajasthan and western U.P., these are the people who produced the wheat. Later, we went to rice. In rice, sadly, Punjab hurt itself to give you the surplus because rice is the world crop. Wheat is only 30 per cent. 70 per cent is rice-the world and India. We hurt ourselves. Out of 120 blocks, a hundred blocks have gone grey on sweet water. There is nothing. It is like Vidharbha now. What are we going to do? We have poisoned ourselves with pesticides and fertilizers. The bio-diversity is gone. I said in a convocation in the Punjab Agricultural University, "Punjab is not a great grain growing State, it is a grain growing factory." Wheat and rice, wheat and rice, हम पागल हो गए हैं इसको उगा-उगा कर। And I said, "As a factory has a lock out, you are going to have a lock out" and people should realise that Punjab has a lock out. Fifteen days ago, I was in Amritsar, forget, Sangrur; forget, Bhatinda. I was told that there were 500 suicides in that district! I was sitting on the stage in a village and people said that that day, a farmer of 46 years of age killed himself with pesticides. दो जवान लड़कियां, कौन शादी करेगा, कौन उनको देखेगा? And two boys and wife, that is it. That is the picture even in Punjab. We have paid for it. As far as water is concerned, Dr. Johl, former Vice-Chairman of the Agricultural University, now quantifies it, he says, "We are making a net export of water in terms of cash." When you depress the price of wheat When you keep the wheat prices depressed or the rice prices depressed, then I am giving the net outflow to somebody. That is what we have been doing for thirty years. And

I have fought against it as a Development Commissioner. And that is what is happening. The CM. is giving free बिजली। I do not agree with Punjab giving it, because I am indirectly pumping more water, ruining my land, and giving you cheap grain elsewhere, at my cost.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

It is a foolish economy in Punjab. They do not understand it. Therefore, I did not agree with my friend here. I thought that is what I understood when she kept on saying, that we are paying five rupees for a kilo to farmer. But you give rice at two rupees! In other words, you are paying the farmer more now! As far as the Agricultural Prices Commission is concerned, I no longer take any interest in it. I did not as the Development Commissioner, because whatever you write, nobody is going to read it, they give you five rupees, notional, and that is the price! Even then, it is made to appear, as if we are being wicked in getting a little more. So, I should be growing grain free to feed the rest of India. मैं महात्मा हूँ, परंतु गुरु नानक तो नहीं हूँ। गुरु नानक की कहानी तो आप जानते हैं। वे तो सच्चा सौदा कर आए थे। जितना बाप ने दिया था, वे जाकर साधुओं को खिला आए। जो किसान हैं, मैं तो किसान हूँ, मैं गुरु नानक तो नहीं हो सकता। इतना यज्ञ तो मैं नहीं लगा सकता। That is the problem and that is where your Punjab is stuck. On diversification, every means is locked. My friend Sharad Pawarji is sitting here, and his friend is the Aviation Minister. Why do I fight for Amritsar airport? And Ramesh keeps on ragging me, because it is the only airport we have, the only exit we have; it is the western gateway out of India, and it is essentially locked. I was there ten days ago. I invite a Parliamentary Committee to pay a visit there. I have been requesting Praful Patel to go there and he will not. He cannot. He is too busy, going somewhere else. So, what am I to do? The Wagah road, one bus, notional, after one and a half years of my energy is gone in arguing only for too little things, "Let me take a bus for 30 miles"! When you have buses from Srinagar, and you are going to have five more, I welcome it. You are going to have a train from Natwarji's State I welcome it. It is all opened up, linked up, be friends, but then why do you keep only Wagah shut? The quadrilateral does not start from Delhi. It starts from Amritsar and Wagah, that is, the northern point. No. The most economically loaded road from Wagah to Delhi, you know what all comes, on it, or what should come, even Kashmir is at the back of it. It is locked. And the Pakistan Minister yesterday says, when the bus went, finally that we have done six-laning, but on the Indian side nothing has happened, in other words, no infrastructure.

I have dreamt when I fight for Amritsar Airport that in winter, vegetables, fruits, everything of Punjab can be loaded at 6 'o clock and put in the Kuwaiti market at 10 o' clock. That is where the two *acrewala* can get an income. Otherwise, he is going to drink pesticide. Let me tell you very clearly that he is going to drink pesticide. What else can he do? And this is not happening. I am fighting for the cargo out of there apart from comfort to passengers. And the same is the road. The road will go to Lahore, Kabul, Turkmenistan, London and Paris and we want to be part of that. If you have an eastern highway going down to Bangkok, why do you not open western? Why only is this little thing stuck? These are the things I am trying to argue about.

Therefore, please keep this aspect of the producers, the farmers of Haryana, of Punjab, of Rajasthan of UP, because otherwise you will have no PDS, if you do not help them. Believe me; we are trying to get out of grain. We do not want to be grain growers. And the other part of the story, I grow the grain, you grow the cash crops, the whole of Southern India. About sugar industry Pawarji knows and I know. I have spent a lifetime in cooperatives. Rubber in Kerala, coffee, tea or whatever, when you are doing it, why should I go on growing depressed prices grain? How long can I sustain it? I also want an income. Why should fruit and flowers come from Holland and Australia to Dubai? They should go from Amritsar. That is what I am arguing. So, this is what I am trying to say. (*Time-bell*) Sir, I will finish. I have got the message. Therefore, on this issue-, I am looking at the two sides of the thing. Yes, the PDS should stay, it should be reformed, it should be cleaned, it should be made effective, those who do not deserve it should not get it, but the basic grain and the basic kerosene should stay in it for the poor. I think there is a point, no matter what the economic cost to Finance Ministers and how they juggle the figures India is always good to have a compassionate policy for its people. So, yes, PDS should be there. But then look also to those who grow the grain and do not absolutely squeeze them out of farming. I read the other things, the GDP, yes, farming has gone down to 30 per cent, 25 per cent, and, we have got 51 per cent of IT and we can live happily ever after. You would not live happily ever after. About 65 per cent of the people of India are rural poor and they are not going to let you rest. They are not going to let you rest, if you are a democracy, as we shall always be. Thank you.

श्री उपसभापति: प्रो. राम देव भंडारी। आपकी पार्टी के लिए पांच मिनट का समय है।

प्रो. राम देव भंडारी (बिहार): उपसभापति महोदय, मैं पांच मिनट में ही अपनी बात समाप्त कर दूंगा।

उपसभापति जी, आज एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर चर्चा हो रही है। सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली वह व्यवस्था है, जिसके माध्यम से देश के नागरिकों को, खासकर कमजोर और गरीब तबके के जो लोग हैं, उनको उचित मूल्य पर खाद्य सामग्री की आपूर्ति की जाती है।

महोदय, मैं श्रीमती वृंदा कारत जी को सुन रहा था, उन्होंने बहुत ही अच्छा भाषण दिया। यह उनका मेडन भाषण था। यह प्रणाली निश्चित रूप से एक लोकप्रिय प्रणाली है और इसके माध्यम से समाज के कमजोर और गरीब लोगों को फायदा होता है।

महोदय, इस देश में कुछ लोग ऐसे हैं, जिनके पास इतनी पूंजी है, इतना पैसा है कि उनके कुत्तों पर भी हजारों रुपये रोज खर्च होते हैं और दूसरी तरफ समाज का एक ऐसा तबका है, जिसे दो जून खाने के लिए रोटी भी नहीं मिलती है, वे भूखों मरते हैं। समाचारपत्रों में खबरें छपती हैं। आजादी के 58 वर्ष बाद भी इस देश में लोग भूखों मरते हैं। एक ऐसी व्यवस्था, जिसके माध्यम से देश के नागरिकों की जो न्यूनतम आवश्यकताएं हैं, रोजी-रोटी, कपड़ा, मकान, पानी, उन सभी आवश्यकताओं की हम उन्हें आपूर्ति कर सकें, यह किसी भी सरकार की जिम्मेदारी होती है। खाद्य सुरक्षा को ध्यान में रख कर जन वितरण प्रणाली की आवश्यकता महसूस हुई और केन्द्रीय एवं राज्य सरकारों, दोनों की संयुक्त जिम्मेदारी पर ही यह व्यवस्था शुरू की गई।

महोदय, केन्द्रीय सरकार की जिम्मेदारी खाद्यान्नों की वसूली, भंडारण, ढुलाई और आंबटन तक है, उसके बाद राज्य सरकारों की जिम्मेदारी होती है कि वह जन वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से, नागरिकों को सामानों की आपूर्ति करवाएं। महोदय, व्यवस्था में कोई खोट नहीं है, लेकिन व्यवस्था को लागू करने में, इस प्रणाली को लागू करने में जो खोट है, उसकी तरफ हमें फिर से ध्यान देना पड़ेगा।

इस प्रणाली का ज्यादा संबंध गांवों से है क्योंकि 70 प्रतिशत लोग गांवों में ही रहते हैं। गांवों में अभी भी गरीबी है। शहरों में भी गरीबी है, लेकिन वहां पर गरीबी उतनी दिखाई नहीं पड़ती, किन्तु आप अगर गांवों में जाएंगे तो वहां पर आपको गरीबी साफ दिखाई पड़ेगी। घर में खाने को अनाज नहीं, बरसात में अगर पानी गिरता है तो उसके घर के अन्दर गिरता है। जो कमजोर वर्ग के लोग हैं, हमने जिन्हें बिलो पावर्टी लाइन में रखा है, उनके लिए सरकार की ओर से विशेष व्यवस्था की गई। 1997 में इसकी शुरुआत हुई थी, उनके लिए आधे मूल्य पर 10 किलो अनाज की व्यवस्था हुई। इस समय हम 35 किलो अनाज उन्हें आधे दाम पर मुहैया करवाते हैं। लेकिन क्या हमने इस पर सोचा कि वह सारा सामान उन तक पहुंचता भी है, जिनके लिए हम वह सामान देते हैं? अभी भी राशन की दुकानों में, जन वितरण प्रणाली की दुकानों में सैकड़ों की संख्या में आपको जाली राशन कार्ड मिलेंगे। इतना ही नहीं, यदि जन वितरण प्रणाली का कोई दबंग दुकानदार हो, वह तो सारे राशन कार्ड यह कह कर कलेक्ट कर लेता है कि जरा हमने सभी कार्डों को फिर से बीडीओ के यहां लेकर जाना है, कार्ड में कुछ गड़बड़ी हो गई है और हमने उनको दिखाना है। वे इस नाम पर राशन कार्ड कलेक्ट करते हैं और सारा सामान ब्लैक मार्किटिंग में बेचते हैं। मुझे कहीं पर पढ़ने को मिला था कि लोगों तक 42 प्रतिशत सामान भी नहीं पहुंचता है।

हमने पांच प्रतिशत लोगों के लिए एक योजना शुरू की थी अन्त्योदय योजना दो रुपये प्रति किलो गेहूं, तीन रुपये प्रति किलो चावल मुहैया करवाया जाता है। ये सरकार की बहुत अच्छी योजनाएं हैं, लेकिन सवाल यह उठता है कि इसका लाभ कितने लोगों तक पहुंचता है। सवाल यह है कि राशन कहां रह जाता है? एक नेक्सस बना हुआ है। सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली में जो दुकानदार हैं, सरकारी अधिकारी, कर्मचारी तथा तथाकथित गांव के जनप्रतिनिधि हैं, उनका एक नेक्सस है। अगर कोई इनके खिलाफ शिकायत करता है, तो शिकायत भी उसी के पास पहुंचती है, जो उस नेक्सस में शामिल है। सर, इसमें रिफॉर्म की जरूरत है। माननीय मंत्री जी बैठे हुए हैं। इनका जवाब आयेगा, कहा जाएगा कि यह राज्य सरकारों का काम है। मगर राज्य सरकारों को अपनी जवाबदेही का अहसास कराना है, उनकी क्या जवाबदेही है, उनकी क्या ड्यूटी है, इसका अहसास उन्हें कराना है।

महोदय, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करने से पहले, एक बार फिर से मंत्री जी से कहना चाहूंगा कि इसमें एक पारदर्शिता होनी चाहिए। इसमें जवाबदेही के साथ-साथ एक पारदर्शिता होनी चाहिए। जो उपभोक्ता है, उनको यह समझ में आना चाहिए कि हमारे लिए कितना सामान आया है। कहने के लिए वहां स्टॉक रजिस्टर होता है और उसमें स्टॉक भी दिखा दिया जाता है, मगर उनसे कोई स्टॉक रजिस्टर दिखाने के लिए कहता है, तो दुकानदार स्टॉक रजिस्टर दिखाने के बदले में उस पर धौंस जमाता है। इसमें रिफॉर्म की जरूरत है। सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को कंटिन्यु रखना है, जारी रखना है। हमें ऐसी व्यवस्था करनी है कि जिनके लिए सामान भेजा जाता है, वह सामान उन तक जरूर पहुंचे। महोदय, मैं इससे सहमत हूँ कि इस सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को जारी रखा जाना चाहिए। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI (Kerala): Sir, this is a very enriching discussion. It has become a very good contribution to the very important discussions that had taken place in this august House. This discussion was initiated by the hon. Member, Shrimati Brinda Karat. She herself has thrown much light on the various aspects and dimensions of the topic, under discussion. She has gone into the depths of the problem faced by the poor, by the ordinary people living Below the Poverty Line. I am not here to make a speech. There is no need of it. Other hon. Members have already spoken in detail. So, I would just like to make a few suggestions.

Sir, the public distribution system is one of the greatest traditions that our country has established. After independence, we have succeeded in formulating certain systems, which were very much helpful in the upliftment of the poor. For example, to our State, that is, Kerala, the public distribution system was granted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime

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Minister of India, considering the particular situation that prevailed in the State at that time. The system was of great help to the State of Kerala, of course, to other States also. But we remember, when we go into the history of our State, this as a gift of the first Prime Minister of India. The public distribution system has helped the poor people not only to get their basic essentials of life at a low cost, but, more than that, this system has become a tradition. I call it a part of national tradition. But, of late, so many developments have taken place in the field of economics, so many changes have taken place. Many slogans have been raised; many discussions have taken place, many great things have been said, for example, globalisation, liberalisation, and economic reforms. Sir, all these things did not help the poor people of this country. Instead, they increased the burden of the people who are under the BPL.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Samadani, you have five minutes.

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI: Sir, I will confine myself to five minutes. In our childhood, we remember people standing in queues before the ration shops to get rice, wheat, kerosene, and sugar at cheaper rates. This has become a part of the village life. But, Sir, we have done great injustice to this tradition of PDS by destroying the system which was a great asylum for the people, especially, the people living below the poverty line. Sir, as far as the farmers of the various States, particularly of Kerala, are concerned, it is high-time for us to verify what is the impact of the so-called economic revolutions, described by certain experts; globalisation, liberalisation etc. What is the impact of these kinds of phenomena on the fate of the poor peasants of this country? That has helped import of our own agricultural products from other countries and also from other countries. Even today, Sir, during the Question Hour, the first question that was raised by my hon. friend, Mr. Premachandran, was with regard to pepper. We remember that when these kinds of things are imported from other countries, the result is that the price has become less within the country. So, that has, actually, given a great blow to our village people's economic condition, and that can be corrected only by enriching and reforming the PDS system. Sir, for that, the black market has to be controlled, the PDS system has to be made more efficient, and that system has to be reformed according to the needs of the hour. The old system

has to be changed. While concluding, I would like to repeat here that the impact of the special phenomena of globalisation, liberalisation and economic reforms on the people of the village have to be verified. I earnestly believe that this phenomenon is, actually, responsible for bringing down the level, the standard of the people of the village, to a very pathetic condition, and that has to be corrected. Sir, by reforming the PDS system we hope the Government will take a very strong step to come to the help of the poor people of this country. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Without quoting a couplet of Iqbal you have concluded. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now, Mr. Arjun Kumar Sengupta. You have seven minutes. You have five minutes, but you have already requested the Chair for giving some more time.

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, I will try to finish within that time. Sir, I will not indulge in an emotional, passionate speech which has already been made by several Members of this House. I fully associate myself with all of them, particularly, with Mr. Gill. It was very good to hear Smt. Brinda Karat, who has put the whole thing in perspective. I think, her diagnosis of the problem, starting from food security, and the problems where we have failed were absolutely correct. But the only point where I differ from her is this. Now let us try to see how we can solve this problem. She is now a part of that Government system. She is as much responsible as anyone on this side to find methods to solve this problem. Why I am saying this is that if you look at the history of the food security system, Ms. Brinda Karat may not like it, the first universal food security system was introduced in this country by Mrs. Indira Gandhi as point No. 17 or 19 of the 20-Point Programme. That is when the first issue came up that we should have a Universal Public Distribution System. In 1985-86, there was a survey done which said that this particular system in terms of coverage, in terms of reach, was perfect. What it was not able to do was to check the irregularities in the system. But what happened was that it was costly. It does cost money to produce this kind of Public Distribution System with big subsidy. Now, we don't like the word 'subsidy' to be removed. But if you have to run a system, you must be aware of the costs, and whether there are alternative ways of doing things, which are less expensive. In this food subsidy, whatever you do -- and Dr. Gill very correctly pointed it out -- there would always be a subsidy even if, what we call, we put it at economic costs, mainly because the transport cost, the distribution cost, and the cost of putting things in a storage all have to be

added to the cost at which the foodgrains are purchased. So, there would always be a cost element. We may have to accept that. But beyond a limit, it becomes a burden, and we must find alternative ways of doing this. So, in 1992, when we were on a liberal reform path, it became very important to see one of the methods by which we can contain this subsidy. And then it was introduced first, the RPDS Programme, which, instead of universalisation, limited this PDS scheme to -- I am not quite sure -- 1700 or 1800 blocks of disadvantaged poor backward areas. Even then the cost -of that was about .45 to .5 per cent of the GDP. It was in 1997 that the system was changed to this Targeted PDS. Mr. Minister is sitting here, I am afraid, after reading this particular document, Evaluation of the Targeted Public Distribution System, which has been brought out by the Planning Commission, I don't think anyone in the Government would be in a position to defend the Targeted Public Distribution System anymore. Just one sentence will be sufficient. This has been for the Introduction by Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. At least, he knows his Economics. He says, "For one rupee worth of income transfer to the poor, the Government of India spends Rs.3.65." The aim should be how to bring it down. The main reason for this Targeted PDS and this whole method -- and, I think, Shrimati Brinda was absolutely right -- of targeting is faulty. It is not so much a question of whether the State wants a BPL which is different from the BPL of the Planning Commission. Ultimately, it is the question of sharing burden between the States and the Centre. And I agree with her that the Centre should bear most of the burden. But the problem is that Below the Poverty Line is a statistical myth. You cannot say that I am an average man. It is very difficult to put forward a particular criterion by which you can say who is poor. So, all the States have their own criteria of Below the Poverty Line. The Rural Development Ministry has pointed it out. It has given such numbers over a period of time. The point is not that. Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the point is what percentage of the population you think you should protect. Now, it so happens that 26 per cent of the people are Below the Poverty Line. According to this definition, Shrimati Brinda has said Rs.327, which is probably not correct; it may be a little more or a little less. But that is the percentage that the Planning Commission has talked about. If you take a slightly more liberal view of 'one Dollar a day', which is the position of the World Bank, then the line goes up to 38 per cent. And if you take '2 dollars a day', which is the universal definition of poverty, then 85 per cent of our people are living Below the Poverty Line. What I am saying here is

this. I am saying that you have to take a decision that, all right, we shall protect 25 per cent of the people or we shall protect this kind of vulnerable people. But we cannot protect everybody. The problem of a universal system is either you make the entitlement very small so that a total sum is not large or the difference between market price and the issue price is so small that there is not much of a diversion. If you do not do it, if you have to say that there is a substantial difference between the market price and the issue price and I open it up to all, 85 per cent will go for this particular subsidy system or PDS. In that case, the subsidy will not be one per cent; it will be minimum three or four per cent of the GDP. Is it really worth? This is the point. We have to take a decision here. I am not saying it is worthy or not. It is for the House to decide. But of this, almost half will not be going to the poor. This is the nature of the system. We could do it through any kind of a distribution system from Punjab to Kerala. This is the way storage costs, transport costs, etc. are added to the price of goods. So, there is at least 50 per cent subsidy. In TPDS, Re.1 of goods are delivered with a subsidy of Rs.3.65, that is almost four times. One dollar is actually the subsidy. What I am saying here is that you have to think of all the different ways by which you are going to spend money. You are going to spend three per cent of GDP on one thing, two per cent of GDP on another thing and another two-and-a-half per cent of GDP on another thing. I am not making any judgement. But you have to take a decision how far you are willing to go. I beg to submit from this point of view that let us now consider a PDS system, revive this RPDS system which covers 1800 blocks, increase it to 3500 blocks. We have got about 169 poorest districts. In fact, the Food-for-Work programme has started there. You define that, that we shall protect these districts and for those districts, you introduce universal system. (*Time-bell*) Do not have this kind of TPDS, do not have the BPL and APL lines. These districts or these particular areas will have full deliveries as per the normal system. Let me just mention this thing because it was mentioned by Shrimati Brinda Karat. Kerala system is successful because they have practised the open universal PDS. But the quantity was very small. This is a fact because in Kerala, people are not food-hungry. They are not developed in many ways, but this is the general position that has come about there. But when the TPDS system came, they broke down. What I am suggesting and Mr. Minister is going to take note of the whole thing, let us not carry on with the TPDS any more; let us not try to have BPL and APL difference because it is artificial. It is like greasing the palm of all kinds of people diving here and there. Let us give it up. Let

us have a universal PDS but for a limited number of people who are really poor. 160 districts or ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA (West Bengal): Sir, kindly for one minute. You are advocating for universal PDS. But you are once again saying that it should be targeted PDS. How these two things go together? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Manoj Bhattacharya, let him complete ...*(Interruptions)*... There are a number of speakers ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA: The problem of targeting is targeting the individual. As I said, I am an individual, I cannot be put as a statistical average. The poverty line is a statistical myth. You would find that very few people can be identified as poor. They do not know how to record it. The line is based on expenditure. They do not know how to estimate it. It is extremely difficult to identify that you are spending this much and you are below the poverty line. The TPDS system fails because it tries to identify families. I agree with you. I am saying that as an answer to it, give it up. Make it universal but target specific areas. You might also say that people who are getting benefit of Employment Guarantee Scheme or certain areas you can put forward. Make it like that. It can work so that the leakage from the system is reduced. I must also mention that this term 'leakage' is a very familiar term used by the Finance Ministry. There is no leakage. It is only from one section of the poor to the other section of the poor. Shrimati Brinda Is absolutely right. With 85 per cent of our people living below two dollar income, if foodgrains go from one person to another person who is getting 370 to 500, that is not leakage. Leakage is that we are still spending money from the public exchequer, and we must consider how to conserve that, how best to allocate that money. So, this is what I want to submit for the consideration of the hon. Minister. Thank you.

श्रीमती माया सिंह (मध्य प्रदेश): उसभापति जी, आज सदन में गरीबों से जुड़े बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर चर्चा हो रही है। महोदय, यह सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की विसंगतिपूर्ण वास्तविकता है कि हमारे यहां गोदामों में अनाज रखने की जगह नहीं है, अनाज सड़ रहा है और दूसरी तरफ लोग अनाज के अभाव में भूख से मर रहे हैं। एक वक्त था जब हमारा देश अन्न उत्पादन में आत्म-निर्भर नहीं था और हमें विदेशों से अनाज आयात करना पड़ता था, लेकिन यह बात अब इतिहास की बात हो गयी है। पिछले तीन दशकों से हमारे किसानों के पुरुषार्थ के चलते हमारा देश अन्न के मामले में न केवल आत्म निर्भर हो गया है बल्कि हम अन्य देशों को भी अन्न निर्यात करने की क्षमता रखते हैं। इस सब के बावजूद भी यह बहुत ही शर्म की बात है कि आज

सुदूर अंचल के आदिवासी गरीब, झोंपड — पट्टी में रहने वाले, मजदूर और खेतों में काम करने वाले लोग — ये ऐसे वर्ग के लोग हैं जिन्हें आज भी अनाज उपलब्ध नहीं हो पाता और वे भुखमरी के शिकार होते हैं।

उपसभापति जी, कहने को तो यह पी.डी.एस. गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहने वाले सभी गरीबों को सस्ता तथा सब्सिडाइज्ड अनाज पहुंचाने के लिए 4.78 लाख दुकानों एक श्रृंखला के तहत पूरे देश के अंदर कार्यरत हैं जोकि पूरे विश्व के अंदर इस कार्य को करने वाली सब से बड़ी चेन है, लेकिन प्रभावी अमल प्रणाली के अभाव में राशन की दुकानों की यह श्रृंखला अधिकांशतः कागजी साबित हो रही है। दो दशक से भी अधिक समय से चल रही इस योजना को अब तक इतना फुल-प्रफ नहीं बनाया जा सका है कि इस का लाभ गरीबों तक पहुंच सके। आए दिन एक तरफ हमें जहां भूख से गरीबों की मौत की खबरें मिलती हैं तो दूसरी तरफ गोदामों में जगह नहीं होने के कारण अनाज सड़ रहा है और तीसरे यह खबर भी पढ़ने को मिलती है और देखने को भी मिलती है कि अनाज की कालाबाजारी भारी मात्रा में हो रही है।

महोदय, पी.डी.एस. सरकार की आर्थिक नीति का सब से महत्वपूर्ण अंग है जिस के चलते 330 मिलियन से अधिक गरीबों को अन्न सुरक्षा मुहैया करानी होती है जिस में चावल, गेहूं, शक्कर और मिट्टी का तेल शामिल है। ये चीजें गरीबों की रोजाना की जिंदगी का आधार होती हैं। इसलिए सरकार ने 1997 में सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को और अधिक विस्तार देते हुए इसे टी.पी.डी.एस. का नाम दिया था यानी Targeted Public Distribution System और जून, 2001 में प्रत्येक परिवार को दी जाने वाली राशन की मात्रा में भी बढ़ोतरी की गयी थी। महोदय, इस योजना के क्रियान्वयन का कई स्तर पर मूल्यांकन भी कराया गया है, लेकिन स्थिति में कोई सुधार देखने को नहीं मिला है। महोदय, इस पी.डी.एस. व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत जो राशन की दुकानें हैं, उन दुकानों की व्यवस्था भी गड़बड़ है। जिन लोगों को दुकानें मिलती हैं, वहां भी देखने को मिलता है कि एक ही व्यक्ति कई नामों से राशन की दुकानें ले लेते हैं। वे न केवल दुकानें लेते हैं बल्कि एक हाथ से दूसरे हाथ तक ये दुकानें पहुंचती हैं या पहुंचायी जाती हैं। मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि राशन की कालाबाजारी नहीं रुकी है और गरीब अनाज के लिए मोहताज हैं। सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की इन खामियों और कमजोरियों पर संसद में जब भी समय समय पर सवाल उठाए गए हैं, तो केन्द्र सरकार ने यह कह कर अपना पल्ला झाड़ लिया कि वितरण-व्यवस्था की जिम्मेदारी राज्य सरकारों की होती है तथा खामियां और कमियों के लिए वे ही जिम्मेदार होते हैं। यह सही है और मैं मानती भी हूँ कि केन्द्र का काम अनाज का संग्रहण और उसे राज्यों को वितरण करना होता है। लेकिन, इतने से ही उनकी जिम्मेदारियाँ समाप्त नहीं हो जाती हैं। मेरे कहने का मतलब है कि आप केन्द्र और राज्य दोनों में देखें कि अगर केन्द्र में अलग दल की सरकार है और राज्यों में किसी दूसरी पार्टी की सरकार है, तो उपसभापति जी, इन दोनों में ये आरोप-प्रत्यारोप चलते रहते हैं। केन्द्र सरकार कहती है कि राज्यों को आवंटन का हिस्सा, जो उन्होंने माँगा था, वह उन्हें दे दिया गया है और वे उठाते नहीं हैं। उधर राज्य सरकारें यह कहती हैं कि उन्होंने कहा जरूर है, लेकिन अभी वह दिया नहीं है। इस तरीके से एक दूसरे पर आरोप और प्रत्यारोप का सिलसिला चलता रहता है।

उपसभापति जी, मेरा यह कहना है कि देश के करोड़ों ग्रामीणों के भूख और भोजन से जुड़े ऐसे गम्भीर मामले को राजनीति से जोड़कर नहीं देखा जाना चाहिए। केन्द्र और राज्य सरकारें दोनों ही मिल कर, ये जो सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की खामियाँ और कमियाँ हैं, वे

किस तरीके से दूर हो सकती हैं, आपसी सहयोग से इनको दूर करने का प्रयास किया जाना चाहिए। केन्द्र सरकार को इस बात की भी सतत् निगरानी रखनी चाहिए कि केन्द्र द्वारा आवंटित अनाज राज्यों के द्वारा शत प्रतिशत क्यों नहीं उठाया जाता और जो अनाज उठाया जाता है, उसका पूर्ण रूप से वितरण क्यों नहीं किया जाता है। जो वितरण कागजों में दिखाया जाता है, वह अनाज गरीबों तक क्यों नहीं पहुँच पाता है। इस व्यवस्था को लेकर कई प्रयोग भी चलते रहे हैं, लेकिन दुख की बात यह है कि अब तक कोई भी फूल पूफ व्यवस्था नहीं विकसित की जा सकी है, जो सभी राज्यों में एक-सी हो। सतत् मॉनिटरिंग करने की व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए, जिससे राशन की दुकानों से राशन की काला बाजारी को रोकने के लिए एक तंत्र विकसित किया जाए।

दूसरे यह भी ध्यान देने की बात है कि सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अंतर्गत जो राशन बेचने वाली राशन की दुकानों को मिलने वाला जो कमीशन है, वह इतना पर्याप्त हो कि उस व्यक्ति का गुजारा हो सके, जो राशन की दुकान चलाता है, अन्यथा एख अनार्थिक उपक्रम में वही व्यक्ति या वही संस्था सम्मिलित होगी, जो काला बाजारी का अंग बने। इसलिए मंत्री जी इस बात पर भी हमको जरा ध्यान देना चाहिए।

इस योजना की आलोचना इस बात को लेकर भी की जाती रही है कि यह शहरों के गरीबों तक ही सीमित है, लेकिन बीते सालों से इसका विस्तार गाँवों तक भी हुआ है। मैं मंत्री जी का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित कराना चाहती हूँ कि देश में अभी भी ऐसे इलाके हैं, जहाँ वर्ष भर यातायात की सुविधा उपलब्ध नहीं होती है और इन इलाकों में अनाज पहुंचाना बहुत ही मुश्किल होता है और ऐसे इलाकों की, ऐसे स्थानों की पहचान करके इसके लिए विशेष प्रबंध किए जाने की जरूरत है।

मैं मंत्री महोदय से कहना चाहूँगी कि इसी तरीके से पी.डी.एस. सिस्टम में ग्राम पंचायतों के अलावा इसमें जो स्व-सहायता समूह, महिला स्व-सहायता समूह और आंगनबाड़ी के जो कार्यकर्ता हैं और कुछ ऐसी ही संस्थाओं को भी इसमें जोड़ने की जरूरत है। इसी के साथ गरीबी रेखा से नीचे जीने वाले परिवारों की पहचान करने की जो प्रक्रिया है या तो जो बी.पी.एल. लोगों की सूची बनती है, उसकी जो प्रक्रिया है, उसे और मजबूत तथा सक्रिय बनाना होगा, ताकि ऐसे परिवारों को इस योजना का लाभ मिल सके। अब क्योंकि इस व्यवस्था में काफी खामियां हैं, ऐसे लोगों की सूची बनाई जाती है जिनको जरूरत नहीं है और जो सचमुच ही गरीबी रेखा के नीचे रहने वाले परिवार हैं, वे बहुत-सारे परिवार इससे छूट भी जाते हैं। इस प्रकार ऐसी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए ताकि ऐसे परिवारों को इस योजना का वास्तविक लाभ मिल सके।

उपसभापति जी, गाँवों में पलायन अब एक नियमित प्रक्रिया बन गयी है। उपसभापति जी, बहुत से गाँवों से बहुत से लोग मजदूरी के लिए दूसरे स्थानों पर जाते हैं, लाखों परिवार रोजगार की तलाश में देश के अलग अलग हिस्सों में पलायन करते हैं। यह पलायन जो है, उनका स्थाई नहीं होता बल्कि अंशकालीन ही होता है। थोड़े समय के लिए काम की तलाश में वे लोग बाहर जाते हैं और फिर वापस लौट कर अपने गांव आ जाते हैं इस तरह जो परिवार चंद महीनों बाद वापस अपने गांव लौटते हैं, तो ऐसे परिवारों को न तो सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अंतर्गत मिलने वाले अनाज का लाभ मिलता है और न ही गरीबी उन्मूलन की किसी अन्य योजना का लाभ इनको मिलता है। इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए मेरा आग्रह होगा कि ऐसे परिवारों की गणना करते हुए उन्हें योजना से लाभान्वित करने वालों की सूची में शामिल करने की जरूरत है

और कोई ऐसी व्यवस्था की लानी चाहिए कि जितने महीने थे लोग रोजगार के लिए बाहर गये थे, उतने महीने का उनका जो अनाज का हिस्सा बनता है, वह गांव में ही कोई अनाज-बैंक या किसी दूसरे तरह की व्यवस्था करके, उसमें जमा किया जा सके और आवश्यकता पड़ने पर प्राकृतिक आपदा या अति-वर्षा, आदि के समय उसका प्रयोग किया जा सके।

उपसभापति जी, इसी तरीके से हमारे यहां भारतवर्ष में हर साल मिट्टी के तेल पर करोड़ों रुपए की सबसिडी दी जाती है ताकि गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रहने वाले जो लोग हैं, उनको अपना खाना बनाने या घर में दिया जलाने के लिए तेल मिल सके। दुख की बात यह है कि पी.डी.एस. के माध्यम से मिलने वाला यह तेल गरीबों तक पहुंचने के बजाय काला-बाजार में जाकर बिकता है और डीजल तथा पेट्रोल में मिलावट के काम में लिया जाता है। इससे पेट्रोल पंप के जो मालिक हैं, वे तकरीबन दस हजार करोड़ रुपए की काला-बाजारी करते हैं। आपने देखा होगा कि कई प्रांतों में ठिठुरती हुई सर्दी में हालत यह है कि लोग केरोसिन ऑयल के लिए लंबी-लंबी लाइनों में खड़े रहते हैं, कई जगह तो सुबह से शाम तक खड़े रहते हैं, लेकिन उनका नंबर नहीं आ पाता है, उल्टे वहां झगड़े होते हैं, मार पीट तक हो जाती है। एक तो मिट्टी का तेल वहां कम मिलता है और दूसरे उनको जो मिट्टी का तेल मिलता भी है, तो वह तीन चार गुना अधिक कीमत पर लेने को मजबूर होते हैं। सर्दी के दिनों में तो केरोसिन ऑयल की जो खपत है, वह 10 से 15 प्रतिशत तक बढ़ जाती है।

उपसभापति महोदय, मध्य प्रदेश में कमोवेश सर्दी के दिनों में केरोसिन ऑयल बहुत कमी रहती है। इसलिए मैं मंत्री महोदय से विशेष आग्रह करना चाहूंगी कि मध्य प्रदेश का केरोसिन ऑयल का कोटा बढ़ाया जाना चाहिए, क्योंकि मध्य प्रदेश में सबसे ज्यादा संख्या में आदिवासी हैं। वहां जंगलों में लकड़ी काटने पर रोक लगी हुई है और कुकिंग गैस तो अभी दूर-दूर तक गांवों में नहीं पहुंच पाई है। यह कुकिंग गैस जिला स्तर और तहसीलों तक ही है। जब उनको यह लकड़ी जलाने के लिए मिलती नहीं, मिट्टी का तेल मिलता नहीं, तो ऐसे में उन गरीब वर्ग के लोगों की दिक्कत बढ़ जाती है। मैं मंत्री महोदय, से यह आग्रह करना चाहूंगी कि मध्य प्रदेश का केरोसिन ऑयल का जो कोटा है, वह बढ़ाया जाए। इसके साथ ही मेरा सुझाव यह भी होगा कि आप बी.पी.एल. में आने वाले गरीबों को पी.डी.एस के माध्यम से मिट्टी के तेल के स्थान पर कुकिंग गैस पर सबसिडी दे दें, इससे मिट्टी के तेल की काला-बाजारी और होने वाली मिलावट से भी बचा जा सकेगा।

इतना ही कहकर मैं अपनी बातें को समाप्त करती हूँ। धन्यवाद।

श्री संजय राजाराम राउत (महाराष्ट्र): उपसभापति जी, एक अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर आज सदन में एक अच्छी डिबेट हो रही है। मैं वृंदा जी का पूरा भाषण ध्यान से सुन रहा था, उससे मैं सहमत हूँ। जो मुद्दे उन्होंने उठाए हैं, उनसे भी मैं सहमत हूँ। पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम के बारे में जो यह चर्चा हो रही है, खुद माननीय मंत्री जी यहां बैठे हैं, वे बहुत काबिल मंत्री हैं, लेकिन इस सिस्टम के बारे में जो परफोरमेन्स है, जो रोना है, वह आज का नहीं है, बल्कि आजादी के बाद से यानी चालीस साल. पचास साल से यही बात हम करते आए हैं। यह जो सिस्टम है, मैं मानता हूँ कि देश के गरीबों के लिए यह एक सबसे बड़ी योजना है, लेकिन गत कई सालों से यह योजना बहस का विषय बन गई है। जो डिबेट यहां हो रही है, मैं सुन रहा

हूं, उससे तो यही लगता है कि यह योजना देश में पूरी तरह से मिट गई है, यह योजना भ्रष्टाचार और घपलाबाजी का एक अड्डा बन गई है।

The PDS has been evolved as a major instrument of the Government's economic policy for ensuring availability of foodgrains to the public at affordable prices as well as for ensuring food security for the poor. The PDS with a network of about five lakh Fair Price Shops is, perhaps, the largest distribution network of its type in the world.

यह बात तो ठीक है, लेकिन क्या इस योजना में सब कुछ ठीक ठाक है? जिस मकसद से इस योजना को बनाया गया था और चलाया जा रहा है, क्या यह योजना सही दिशा में गरीबों के लिए काम कर रही है? मुझे लगता है कि इसमें कुछ दोष हैं, खामियां हैं, जिन्हें सुधारने की जरूरत है। प्लानिंग कमीशन की इस बारे में जो रिपोर्ट है, उसका भी यही कहना है।

सर, नेता घोषणा करते हैं कि हमारे गोदाम अनाज से पूरी तरह से भर गए हैं, उनमें तिल रखने की भी जगह नहीं है, वहीं दूसरी ओर देश के अलग-अलग इलाकों से कुपोषण और भुखमरी की खबरें सुर्खियां बन चुकी हैं। यह तथ्य है कि सदोष सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के चलते कहीं गोदामों में अनाज पड़ा-पड़ा सड़ जाता है, उसे चूहे खा जाते हैं। वहीं कुछ स्थान ऐसे भी हैं जहां अनाज के अभाव में लोग आम की गुठलियां या कंद-मूल खाने पर विवश हो जाते हैं यह एख शर्मनाक विरोधाभास है। कम से कम अब सरकार का इस ओर ध्यान गया है और उसमें देश के हर गांव में अनाज बैंक खोलने का निश्चय किया है। सर, मुझे लगता है कि फिलहाल यह योजना देश के 11 राज्यों में चलाई जा रही है, विशेषतः आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में इस अभियान को सफलता मिल रही है। इसमें कुछ गैर-सरकारी संगठनों की मदद ली जा रही है। इस योजना में बैंक से अनाज उधार दिया जाएगा, जो एक निश्चित अवधि के बाद ब्याज समेत, जो अनाज के रूप में ही होगा, वापिस करना होगा। यह योजना केवल गरीबी रेखा से नीचे जीवन बिताने वालों तथा अंत्योदय अन्न योजना के लाभार्थियों तक सीमित रहेगी, यह एक अच्छा कदम है। आजाद हिन्दुस्तान में कोई भुखमरी या कुपोषण से मरे अथवा पेट की आग बुझाने के लिए किसी को अपने कलेजे के दुकड़े को बेचना पड़े, इससे शर्म का बात और कोई नहीं हो सकती। उचित होगा कि इस योजना को भ्रष्टाचार से मुक्त रखा जाए और एहतियात बरती जाए कि जरूरतमंदों को इस योजना से समय पर अच्छी किस्म का अनाज मिले। यह न हो कि अच्छा अनाज कहीं बीच में ही गायब हो जाए और पशु खाद्य से भी निकृष्ट अनाज गरीबों को मिले। सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की खामियां यहां नहीं आनी चाहिए।

सर, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी का ध्यान आपके माध्यम से प्लानिंग कमीशन की रिपोर्ट की ओर खींचना चाहता हूं।

The Planning Commission of India, recently, reviewed the Public Distribution System and its implementation all over the country and submitted a report.

In the same report, the Commission has concluded that as much as 35 per cent of the foodgrains distributed through the PDS do not reach

the poor beneficiaries in Maharashtra. At the national level, 42 per cent beneficiaries do not get the benefit of the PDS. It has recommended that the PDS should be handed over to the Self-Help Groups.

यह बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। The Planning Commission has said that the PDS should be handed over to the jobless youths and women Self-Help Groups in rural areas. This will not only help reduce corruption in the PDS but also become a source of income for unemployed youth and women.

In Maharashtra, there are 50,000 Fair Price Shops and 55,000 retail kerosene licence holders who distribute foodgrains, sugar and kerosene. These licences should be handed over to the youth or women's self-help groups in the same villages or areas.

Under the TDPS, ration cardholders with less than Rs.1 lakh income are given wheat and rice. However, the foodgrains sold at fair price shops under the PDS are not cheap as compared to the same available in the open market. Because of this, the cardholders do not purchase foodgrains at the fair price shops. For the above poverty line cardholders, the Centre sends 4 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains while the sale is only 5,000 metric tonnes which means just one per cent of the foodgrains sent is lifted at fair price shops. There is a need for a fresh survey of below poverty line and above poverty line cardholders.

Fake cards, corruption by fair price shop owners, indifference of bureaucracy and political leadership towards the PDS mar the system. Even the common people know little about the PDS.

The vigilance committees appointed to keep check on the PDS are useless since they are filled with politicians. Even if the shop owners are found guilty of irregularities, hardly any of them are punished. When these evils will be removed, the needy section of the population will get benefit of the PDS.

I would like to suggest a few steps which the Government could take to make the PDS useful for the beneficiaries: (i) The Government should accept the recommendation made by the Supreme Court in respect of Commissioner's appointment (ii) Those who are involved in hoarding and black marketing of foodgrains received under the PDS should be severely punished. Even the concerned officers should face stringent punishment. फेक राशन कार्ड जो है वह अत्यंत गंभीर समस्या है The fake ration cards should be cancelled and the Government should find out the Bangladeshis staying

illegally in Mumbai and in other parts of the country, and cancel their ration cards.

सर, यह जो पी.डी.एस. का सिस्टम है, इसमें जो ऑफिसर्स हैं, जो व्यापारी है. वे यह घपला करते हैं और इन घपलेबाजियों से बांग्लादेशियों को फायदा मिलता है। सर, मैं मुम्बई का रहने वाला हूँ और मुझे मालूम है कि मुम्बई में ऐसे बहुत से एरियाज़ है. मैं उनमें से कुछ के नाम बताता हूँ कि बेहरामपाडाए, रे रोड ट्राम्बे, गोवंडी, जोगेश्वरी, अंधेरी, मानखुर्द, कुर्ला, ये ऐसे कई मुस्लिम बहुत इलाके हैं, जहां पिछले आठ वर्षों में बीपीएल कार्ड होल्डर्स के लिहाज़ से गरीबों की संख्या अचानक बेताहाशा बढ़ गई है और ये बीपीएल कार्ड होल्डर्स हमारे हिन्दुस्तानी मुसलमान भाई नहीं है। सर, मैं दावे के साथ कह सकता हूँ कि इनमें से अधिकांश बांग्लादेशी घुसपैटिए हैं और ये बांग्लादेशी हमारे देश का सस्ता अनाज पचा रहे हैं...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: संजय जी, आपका टाइम बहुत हो गया है।

श्री संजय राजाराम राउत: नहीं सर, अभी दो मिनट और बाकी हैं।

श्री उपसभापति: आपको बोलते हुए दस मिनट हो गए हैं।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री संजय राजाराम राउत: नहीं सर अभी पांच भी मिनट नहीं हुए हैं।

श्री उपसभापति: इनको क्या हो गया है?

श्री संजय राजाराम राउत: सर, ये बांग्लादेशी हमारे देश का सस्ता अनाज पचा रहे हैं और इस बहाने पब्लिक डॉक्यूमेंट्स बना कर हिन्दुस्तानी नागरिकता का जुगाड़ भी कर लेते हैं। इसलिए तत्काल इन राशनकार्डों का सर्वेक्षण होना चाहिए लेकिन यह सर्वेक्षण पी.डी.एस. ऑफिसर्स और विजिलेंस कमेटी के भरोसे पर नहीं होना चाहिए क्योंकि इन कमेटीज में स्थानीय राजनेता भरे हुए हैं, जो वोट की खातिर राष्ट्रीय हितों का सौदा करते हैं। यही कारण है कि गलती करते हुए पकड़े जाने पर भी राशनिंग दुकानदार बच जाते हैं। मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से यही निवेदन करूंगा कि ये जो बातें हैं, जिनके कारण पी.डी.एस. सिस्टम बदनाम हो रही है और उसका लाभ गरीबों तक नहीं पहुंच रहा है, मैं उनसे विनती करता हूँ रिक्वेस्ट करता हूँ कि वे इस पर गम्भीरता से विचार करें ताकि इस योजना का लाभ ज्यादा से ज्यादा गरीबों तक पहुंचे। धन्यवाद।

प्रो. अलका क्षत्रिय (गुजरात): धन्यवाद उपसभापति महोदय। आज सदन में गरीबों से जुड़े हुई एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण और गंभीर समस्या पर चर्चा हो रही है। हमारे देश में सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली का गठन देश के गरीब लोगों को पेट भरने लायक अनाज उचित मुल्य पर मुहैया कराने के लिए हुआ है। लेकिन भ्रष्टाचार और लूट की वजह से उपरोक्त मनवीय उद्देश्य सिद्ध नहीं हो पा रहे हैं। भ्रष्टाचार की आड़ में गरीब लोगों को राशन नहीं मिल रहा है और अगर राशन मिल भी रहा है, तो वह बहुत कम और घटिया किस्म का अनाज मिल रहा है। जहां एक तरफ देश के गोदामों में अनाज भरा पड़ा है और वहीं दूसरी तरफ इस देश का गरीब आदमी, किसान भूख की वजह से मर रहा है। आत्महत्या कर रहा है। सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली केन्द्र और राज्य सरकारों की संयुक्त जिम्मेदारी से चलाई जाती है। इसकी कार्यशैली में केन्द्र सरकार राज्यों को खाद्यान्न मुहैया कराती है और साथ में उसका आवंदन करती है। और साथ में

उसकी दुलाई भी करती है। जब की राज्य सरकार की भूमिका गरीब लोगों की पहचान करना उनका राशन कार्ड जारी करना उचित दर की दुकानें खोलना उनका चयन करना. उनकी उचित मॉनिटरिंग करना और राज्य के अंदर लोगों को प्रभावी ढंग से अनाज का वितरण करने की है। राज्यों की मांग के मुताबिक केन्द्र सरकार राज्यों को अनाज का आंबटन करती है और राज्य सरकार बीपीएल परिवारों का चयन करती है। जहां से इन बीपीएल परिवारों का चयन होता है. वहीं से भ्रष्टाचार की शुरुआत होती है। वहीं भ्रष्टाचार का मूल है यह कहना चाहिए। वास्तव में देखा गया है कि बीपीएल परिवारों में जिन लोगों को आना चाहिए, उनमें में काफी लोगों का समावेश इसमें नहीं हो रहा है। सूची में ऐसे कई लोग हैं, जिनका बीपीएल परिवारों से कहीं दूर-दूर तक का वास्ता नहीं है, उनका नाम इस लिस्ट में रखा गया है उनको इसमें शामिल किया गया है। कभी कभी तो ऐसे जाली राशन कार्ड भी बनाये जाते हैं. इन जाली राशन कार्डों को दुकानदार अपने पास रखकर हर महीने एंट्री करके काफी बड़ी मात्रा में घपला करते हैं। इतना ही नहीं कभी कभी तो बिना फोटो और बिना नाम के जाली राशन कार्ड बना दिये जाते हैं और बाद में इनमें नाम भर दिये जाते हैं। ऐसे राशन कार्डों में जिन लोगों के नाम डाले जाते हैं, उनका नाम वहां की मतदाता सूची में भी डाला जात है और मतदाता सूची का उपयोग करके और राशन कार्ड का उपयोग करके, इलेक्शन के टाइम में इनसे मतदान भी करवाया जाता है। इस प्रकार जाली लोगों का उपयोग मददान में किया जाता है। राशन डिलरों और नागरिक आपूर्ति मिभाग के इन्सपेक्टरों के बीच की सांठगंठ ही इस भ्रष्टाचार की जड़ है। एक सूचना के अनुसार दिल्ली में सन् 2000 में 44.11 लाख राशन कार्ड दिये गये थे। अगर यह माना जाये कि हर परिवार में पांच सदस्य हैं. तो पीडिएस. से लाभान्वित व्यक्तियों की संख्या लगभग दो करोड़ होगी, जो दिल्ली की जनसंख्या से कहीं बहुत अधिक है। इस आकड़े से पता चलता है कि पी.डी.एस में भ्रष्टाचार कितने व्यापक पैमाने पर हो रहा है।

उत्तर प्रदेश में अंत्योदय योजना के तहत सरकारी गोदामों से लोगों को सड़ा-गला अनाज दिया जाता है। बागपत जिले के सरकारी गोदाम में रखे गये चावल को वहां के राशन डीलर्स मुफ्त में भी उठाने के लिए तैयार नहीं थे क्योंकि कमीशनखोरी के चक्कर में वहां के खाद्य विभाग के अफसरों ने सड़ा गला अनाज लोगों से खरीद लिया था और उसे वहां रखा था, जिसे वे लोग उठाना भी नहीं चाहते थे। ऐसी घटिया किस्म का अनाज लोगों को दिया जाता है। सन 2001 और 2002 में अंत्योदय योजना के तहत और सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली में व्याप्त जो भ्रष्टाचार हैं, उसके बारे में अध्ययन किया गया था। उसके अनुसार हर वर्ष एक करोड़ पचास लाख टन अनाज खाद्य निगम से उठाया जाता है। उसमें से सिर्फ पचास प्रतिशत यानी 75 लाख टन अनाज ही लाभान्वित परिवारों तक पहुंचाया जाता था और बाकी 75 लाख टन अनाज की कालाबाज़ारी होती है। प्रति वर्ष यह घोटाला पांच हजार करोड़ रुपये का होता है जिसके सामने अन्य तमाम घोटाले फीके पड़ जाते हैं। आंकड़ों की बात जाने दें। यह घोटाला इसलिए भी अधिक गंभीर और अमानवीय भी बनता है कि यह अत्यंत गरीब लोगों की रोटी छीनता है और इसका फायदा पीडीएस के कालाबाज़ार में लिप्त लोगों को मिलता है। इस समस्या का एक दूसरा पहलू भी है कि दुकानदार अगर ईमानदारी से पी.डी.एस. की दुकान चलाता है, तो उसे हर महीने 3700 रुपये का घाटा होता है और ऊपर से भ्रष्ट अधिकारियों को जो कमीशन देना पड़ता है, उसे अगर जोड़ा, तो उसका घाटा बहुत बड़ा हो जाता है। भ्रष्टाचार और कालाबाज़ार की कीमत गरीब जनता को चुकानी पड़ती है और वे अनाज और मिट्टी के तेल से वंचित रह जाते हैं। पिछले दिनों इसी सदन में मिट्टी के तेल में व्यापक भ्रष्टाचार के मामले में जब चर्चा हुई थी,

[14 December, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

उससे पता चला था कि मिट्टी के तेल के वितरण में भ्रष्टाचार का मूल केन्द्र भी उचित दर की दुकाने ही है। इस व्यवस्था में भ्रष्टाचार इतना व्यापक हो चुका है कि कभी कभी तो लगता है कि यह सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली नहीं है, बल्कि यह सार्वजनिक भ्रष्टाचार प्रणाली बन गई है जहां हर स्तर पर भ्रष्टाचार सार्वजनिक होता गया है जिसे हम खुले आम कालाबाजार कहते हैं। यह सब अकेले तो संभव नहीं है। इसके लिए दुकानदार जितना दोषी है, उतनी ही दोषी वह इंस्पेक्टर हैं, बल्कि उससे भी कहीं ज्यादा दोषी अगर कोई है तो प्रशासन तंत्र है। इसमें सुधार होना अति आवश्यक है अन्यथा सरकार को यह मान लेना चाहिए कि हम गरीबों के मुंह से निवाला छीन रहे हैं जो ठीक नहीं हो रहा है। इसमें सुधार करने के लिए केन्द्र सरकार को राज्य सरकार के माध्यम से डिस्ट्रिक्ट कलेक्टर की जवाबदेरी तय करनी होगी तभी इसमें कुछ सुधार हो सकता है। अगर कहीं भ्रष्टाचार पाया जाता है तो इसके लिए डिस्ट्रिक्ट कलेक्टर दो दोषी मानकर स पर कार्यवाही करनी होगी तभी पी.डी.एस. में व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार के शेषनाग को हम नियंत्रित कर सकते हैं जिससे भविष्य में कभी किसी गरीब आदमी को या किसान को आत्महत्या न करना पड़े। वित्तीय घाटे को कम करने के लिए और साथ ही सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को कारगर ढंग से चलाने के लिए सरकार को उसमें व्यापक सुधार करने चाहिए और व्यापक सुधार करके इसे असरकारक बनाना चाहिए जिससे इस देश के गरीबों को उचित मूल्य पर अनाज मिल सके। धन्यवाद।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Manoj Bhattacharya, you have five minutes. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA : Sir, I don't even require much time because my hon. colleague, Shrimati Brinda Karat has really covered the points very effectively. I have stood only to support her that she has very well articulated the issue, and I am sure, the hon. Minister is also moved by the speech of Shrimati Brinda Karat.

Sir, I just begin by complimenting the hon. Minister. Yesterday, I was looking at *Hindustan Times*. In that, a very important issue has been raised by the hon. Minister, Shri Sharad Pawarji, where he has told that it appears funny to him that in this country of ours, the economic policies are so decided that for purchasing a luxury motor car the banks charge 7 "per cent tax, and for a farmer...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Seven per cent interest, not tax.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Interest, not tax; sorry. Thank you very much for correcting me. Whereas for farmers, it is 12 to 14 per cent. Sir, he is really a very conscientious person, and he has rightly diagnosed the problems of ours. We have been discussing about the WTO; *de minimis*, we are discussing. The subsidy which, is due to our farmers, that subsidy could not be given because of budgetary constraints. When people are dying out of hunger; when people are living hungry, the subsidy cannot be

given because of budgetary constraints. Sir, my friend, Brinda has gone into deep details; I would just refer to very interesting 11 policy commitments of the globalisation and neo-liberalism. Sir, I am quoting from the ILO Report, 2004. "One, international financial market liberalisation; two, domestic capital market liberalisation; three, trade liberalisation (particularly in developing countries); four, labour market 'flexibility'; five, secure individual property rights over physical and financial assets; six, weak property rights over human assets (particularly skills); seven, a reduction in the size and role of the public sector, including privatisation of publicly-owned productive assets, and an end to managed trade and industrial policies; eight, a system of taxation that is not only less progressive but also shifts taxes from capital to labour," taxes from capital to labour, I am underlining it, "and subsidies from labour to capital; nine, independent central banks (as part of a more general move towards the "technocratization" of economic policymaking;" Now, Sir, this point number 10 is very important and pertinent to the issue which has been raised by my colleague Shrimati Brinda Karat. That is, "a social safety net" type of approach to social protection: *i.e.*, more targeting, selectivity and conditionality. The 11* is privatisation and liberalisation of social policy.

Sir, these things have been discussed in this House time and again. I remember that in this sort of discussions I also have taken part, time and again; during the NDA time, problems were more vigorous; and we also have tried from the Opposition to raise this issue time and again. These issues have been discussed time and again may be not that articulately as Brinda did it today. But we have also discussed it. The net result is virtually nothing. The hon. Minister is well aware about the dismal situation that is existing; in so far as what you have termed as the 'statistical myth', he is also aware. We have discussed it. He was very kind, after the direction given by the hon. Chairman of this House, he called a meeting of the Members of Parliament and we sat in the Main Committee Room in the Annexe building. For almost six hours, he sat with patience. He noted down the points, because he is with the people. He is well aware of the ground reality. He is well aware of what is happening in Nandurbag and other districts in his own State, in many districts of Maharashtra. He is aware of what is happening to the children and people--they are dying because of malnutrition. I personally feel that it is a shame when I came to know that in this country of ours, after almost sixty years of Independence, when we are at the fag end of the Tenth Five-Year Plan, even many children of our country get blind at an early age because of malnutrition, because they do

not get the required food, to have their proper vision. This is a very dismal situation. I do not require to detail it out.

The hon. Minister is a very responsible person. I would like to know whether he is in a position to make a paradigm shift from these policy commitments--what the Government has adhered to, what the earlier Government has adhered to, what the earlier than the earlier Government has adhered to. And the situation has got complicated. Today, we are in a difficult situation.

Shri Arjun Sengupta is a noted economist. He has spent his time in the Planning Commission. He is well aware. He has told that almost 85 per cent of our population is virtually Below the Poverty-Line. If you take two dollars a day as wage, it means Rs.85 which is nothing. If we set the criterion of Rs.85 a day, then 85 per cent of our population is living Below the Poverty-Line. It is a real shame. These policies, whatever they are, have all been taken in the glamorous name of 'service to the poor man', sometimes, in the name of *Garibi Hatao*, sometimes in the name of something else, sometimes in the name of Pradhan Mantri. But, ultimately, the ground reality is that we have not been able to solve the problems of the poor, or, the majority. About 85 per cent of people means, nothing less than 87 Crores of people. Sir, it is not just 85 per cent, it is 87 Crores! There is a widespread conspiracy internationally; I know for certain, that on an average, every year-it is a mind boggling figure-1,70,000 peasants die; 1,70,000 farmers, agriculturists die because of not only hunger but also because of over use of pesticides, accidents in farms; accidents are very common in farms. They are very common in agricultural farms for farmers or agriculturists.

Sir, I cannot really suggest, I cannot do real justice within the span of five minutes by giving some suggestions to the Minister. But the suggestions have already been made. Once again, I raise my core question: Is the hon. Minister in a position to make a paradigm shift or drift from the existing policy decisions of the 'Governments' of India, if at all you can make a shift of policy decision from the Government of India.

I must submit to you that this sort of casual treatment will not help. This Government is doing some scratches here and there. The entire building, the entire construction has become dilapidated one. It requires an overhauling. Instead of overhauling, if you go in for a patchwork here and

there, you will never be able to do the patchwork and you will never be able to serve the majority of people in this country.

Sir, I once again say that unless the policy decisions of Government--which are pro-rich, which are elitist--are changed formidably, unless there is a change in the outlook, we shall not be able to solve this problem of hunger and the problem of destitution. In my opinion, they are not the hungry people, but they are destitute people. We always warn that this capitalism, at a certain stage, makes young people destitute. I am sure it would not be unconstitutional because it is said that in capitalism in a State, young people are subverted to destitute and young women are prostitutes. That is a very unfortunate situation. We are heading for that situation unless we take corrective measures, formidable measures and also resort to serious measures, and if we do not look behind what we have lost and what we have gained, we shall not be able to resolve this problem. With these few words, Sir, I thank you very much and I once again compliment Brinda Karat for raising this issue. I also thank all the hon. Members who have taken part in this debate. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You wanted some clarification. ...((Interruptions)... He is not there. ...((interruptions))...-

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE (Uttar Pradesh): You were very kind to mention me twice by name and because of my extremely high regard for Mr. Pawar for 30 years and because of the great work that he has done in addressing many of the problems that Brinda has drawn the attention of the House to, in Baramati where I had the occasion to see it for myself. I just want to make two points so that out of the great concern which Brinda and the whole House has for the poor, the good ideas should also not get thrown out just in the rash of that concern and I will draw the attention of the Minister to that. Sir, because many of problems, as Dr. Arjun Sengupta was pointing out, are the cumulative results, • in the PDS also, of many wrong policies over decades. Some of the things it was said would intensify or aggravate those problems. Sir, I will mention see what is the crux responsibility of the Central Government in all this. It procures partly to help the farmers and then it distributes to the States. It is the State Governments, which then select the distributors for the items. They are the ones who identify the BPL families and so on. Now, we, by this great concern for the poor, may well be missing the real problem and I will mention two examples of this. Sir, Mr. Gill said that the proposal for the decentralised procurement was actually a backhand way of doing away with

5.00 P.M.

the Public Distribution System. Actually this decentralised procurement by the State Governments has been going in, if you see from the Economic Survey of just last year, since 1997. Punjab and Haryana Governments also procured from through their Agricultural Marketing Boards. West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, all procured. The reason is that, otherwise, Chhattisgarh today procures paddy has to hand it over to the Centre and when it needs for its own Public Distribution System, it has to beg from the Centre. The Centre sends it the rice procured from Punjab. It is only elevating the cost of this whole programme. So, many things we are wailing against in our great anxiety for the poor are actually a few good ideas, which should be examined. Similarly, there is a demand every time whenever there is a discussion on farmers that they need higher Minimum Support Prices. Mr. Sharad Pawar's work in Baramati is a standing example of that. The very fact against which Mr. Gill was reminding us the harm that Punjab has done by becoming just a factory for rice and for wheat and it has come about because of the Minimum Support Prices which have discouraged the farmers, given a little incentive in going for crop diversification. Again we should not mix up these two things. The third point and I will, Sir, take two minutes for this, is not to underestimate the problem. Mr. Gill said and others have also said, oh, oh, if there is a problem in regard to the leakages in the system,-- actually Arjun Sengupta was just saying that it is from one part of the poor to the other, that is not the case. Somebody else, maybe, the middlemen are taking it. I will draw your attention to the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Ninth Plan, written almost entirely by a member of the National Advisory Council, my dear friend Mr. N.C. Saxena. Sir, there is a table on page 163 which Brinda and others would like to see so that we do not underestimate this problem.

It shows the State-wise details of what is the estimated diversion of wheat, rice and sugar. It varies from 30 per cent to 100 per cent! I will just read out one paragraph from this as to whether we should explore alternative systems. In this very appraisal, it was said, 'at that time, the entire subsidies that were being given were only about Rs. 40,000 Crores...' -- and it also said -- '...that this is an underestimate because the States are also giving some subsidies.' And, if further says, 'the total number of poor families in the country being approximately five Crores, the allocation of funds per poor family would then be roughly Rs. 8,000 per annum. Even assuming that each of the five crore families were completely penniless and

had no other source of income, they could buy, everyday, 3 kgs. of foodgrains with this money from the market at the rate of Rs. 7.50 per kg...' -- at that time -- ...and thus come above the poverty line automatically.' So, they said that it is a very serious matter for the Government to consider that if you just send that money of Rs. 40,000 Crores by Money Order to the BPL families, they could automatically come up. So, whether we are doing a service or harming the poor by saying things which we are just saying and arguing for the continuance is a matter which should be examined. I am all for the distribution system. But, I do feel that in our anxiety we should not underestimate the enormous problems that are involved in this.

Sir, just one final point I want to make. A very fine and great economist and a very modest man, whom Sharad Pawar would have known and many people from Maharashtra would have known, Prof. Lakdawala, was mentioned by Shrimati Brinda. She was saying that we should be more attuned to our realities rather than Hong Kong. You could not have found a person more attuned than...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: I did not say that.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: The definition of Below Poverty Line, based on the intake of calories, is a definition that has been examined umpteen times by several Committees. It was even considered once again for revision by the National Development Council with all Chief Ministers present. Some of the States were saying, 'no, no. Our definition of identification of 45 per cent should be taken, rather than 30 per cent.' Sir, the reason for that was that under the Gadgil-Mukherjee Formula of allocation of funds and under the Finance Commission for Devolution of Funds, the greater the proportion of poverty that you could claim, the more funds under one largest Head you would get. And, for that reason, all the State Chief Ministers ultimately agreed to leave it to the Central Government's identification. So, it is the old estimate that has not been updated. For instance, the State Governments which were doing good work with regard to ration prices, like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, they would then be at disadvantage because the ration price was not taken into account. Even though, had that been taken into account, the amounts they receive would become less. For all these reasons, I would say that it is a more complicated problem than just something that as if we are not attuned to the problems of the country and I would sincerely commend to the House that we should all at some stage - many of us to take the opportunity - see how a progressive Member of Parliament in Shri Sharad Pawar has been able to attend to many of these problems in Baramati itself

and in many other States. Today, this kind of work is being done by another Member of our House, who was here till recently, in Chittrakut. So, there are different experiments of reaching the poor. We should go with them and not just go on repeating that, 'yes; there is one system and that should be enlarged and so on and so forth.' I am all for the system, but with improvements. Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

The status of implementation of recommendations contained in the second, third, fourth and fifth reports of the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): Sir, I lay a statement on the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Reports of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence (14th Lok Sabha).

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

Public Distribution System in the country - *Contd.*

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA (Karnataka): Thank you very much, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to speak on this important subject of the Public Distribution System.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN) in the Chair]

Sir, while expressing my views on the functioning of the Public Distribution System, I would like to say that the PDS is a major instrument of the Government's economic policy for ensuring availability of foodgrains to the people at the affordable prices, as well as for ensuring the food security for the poor. The PDS, with a network of 4.77 lakh fair price shops, is, perhaps, the largest distribution network of its kind in the world. This huge network can play a major meaningful role only if the system translates the micro-level self-sufficiency in the production of foodgrains into micro-level self-sufficiency in ensuring the availability of food for the poor households.