

**SHORT NOTICE QUESTION****Shortage of Godowns**

2. SHRI PARASHOTTAM KHODABHAI RUPALA Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state the action taken by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government on the fact that Food Corporation of India (FCI) is facing severe shortage of godowns for various foodgrains as, it has been observed that during rainy season, foodgrains are wasted and that the Central Government is going to implement the Food Security Act.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

***Statement***

The total storage capacity available for storage of Central Food Stocks as on 31.12.2013 is 755.89 lakh MTs. The total food stocks on 31.12.2013 was 427.45 lakh MTs. Thus, the storage capacity available is more than sufficient for storing Central Food Stocks.

The total requirement of foodgrains for implementing the National Food Security Act (NSFA) is estimated to be 612 lakh MTs. The available storage capacity is more than what is required to stock foodgrains for implementing the NFSA. However, augmentation of storage capacity is required in a few States for operational reasons which is addressed through Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) Scheme and Plan funds.

Thus, FCI is not facing any shortage of storage space for Central Pool Food Stocks. Sometimes, due to increased arrivals of grains during the peak of the procurement season, the Covered and Plinth (CAP) storage is resorted to as a temporary measure. In this regard, all precautions are taken to ensure that there is no wastage of foodgrains on account of rains.

श्री पुरुषोत्तम खोडाभाई रूपाला : सर, मैंने जो सवाल पूछा था, वह देश में अन्न भंडारण की जो कमी महसूस हो रही है, उसकी जानकारी के लिए पूछा था। जवाब को सुनकर मुझे बहुत दर्द हुआ। जवाब में यह बताया गया है कि जितनी आवश्यकता है, उससे ज्यादा सुविधा है, अतः नए अन्न भंडारण बनाने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। यह जवाब लिखित में दिया गया है। मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि अभी खरीफ के सीज़न में गुजरात में ग्राउंडनट, जो

बिलो एमएसपी जा रहा था, उसकी खरीदी हो रही थी, जो सिर्फ गोदामों की कमी की वजह से बंद करनी पड़ी। यह अभी दस दिन पहले की बात है। मैं हाउस में इस रिटर्न जवाब को पढ़ रहा हूँ कि गोदामों की व्यवस्था, जितनी जरूरत है, उससे ज्यादा है। सर, कम से कम इस सवाल का जवाब टेक्नीकल जवाबों में तो मत दिया कीजिए। आपने यह एस्टीमेट लगाया होगा कि इतने धान की जरूरत है, इसको रखने के लिए इतने गोदाम चाहिए, आप खरीदेंगे तो देंगे। लेकिन जब किसान की फसल आती है और उसकी बिक्री जब एमएसपी से नीचे चली जाती है, उस समय उसको प्रोक्योर करना गवर्नमेंट की जिम्मेदारी होती है और उस जिम्मेदारी का निर्वहन करने के लिए इनके पास गोदाम नहीं होते हैं। इसका जिक्र करने की आवश्यकता थी, लेकिन उसके बजाय आपने टेक्नीकल जवाब दे दिया। सर, सिर्फ यही वजह है कि इस देश में किसानों द्वारा किए हुए उत्पादन को सही दामों में न बेच पाने की वजह से लाखों किसान आत्महत्या कर रहे हैं।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Put your question. आप प्रश्न पूछिए।

श्री पुरुषोत्तम खोडाभाई रूपाला : सर, मैंने जो प्रश्न पूछा था, उसके संबंध में मैं सरकार से जानना चाहता हूँ कि जब भी किसानों की फसल आए और उसे एमएसपी से नीचे बेचने के लिए उन्हें मजबूर होना पड़े, उस समय की स्थिति से निपटने के लिए सरकार के मन में क्या कोई मंशा है? क्या सरकार इस संबंध में कुछ सोचती है और अगर सोचती है तो क्या इसका कोई हल है, वह हम जानना चाहते हैं?

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the Government of India through FCI and the State Government agencies is procuring mainly wheat and rice. Wherever the State Government wants to procure products like groundnut, we will help the State Government. I have got the State-wise data of the storage capacity in every State, including Gujarat. In Gujarat, the capacity owned by FCI is 5 lakh MTs. The percentage of utilization is only 73 per cent. Hired capacity is 2.95 lakh MTs. The percentage of utilization is 77 per cent. We have got CAP also. If the Gujarat Government wants storage facility, it is available with us. Five years back, our storage capacity was to the tune of 55 MTs, which we have increased up to 77 MTs. We have got plans with the assistance of the State Governments, especially under the Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) Scheme and Silos, to construct another 20 to 25 MTs of storage capacity. And we are in touch with all the State Governments. Whichever State Government wants additional construction of godowns, especially in villages and taluks, there are Central Government schemes which State Governments can make use of. Regarding MSP, whenever the FCI takes over the foodgrains, we ensure that MSP is given to farmers. Sir, the procurement is mainly done by State Governments.

श्री पुरुषोत्तम खोडाभाई रूपाला : सर, आपने बताया कि एमएसपी के भाव पर ही सरकार खरीदती है, उसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है। उपसभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि अभी के खरीफ सीज़न में गुजरात में ग्राउंटनट की जो खरीदी हो

[श्री पुरुषोत्तम खोडाभाई रुपाला]

रही थी, वह केवल गोडाउंस की कमी की वजह से बंद करनी पड़ी थी, क्या यह बात सरकार की जानकारी में है? अगर यह आपकी जानकारी में है तो फिर इसके समाधान के लिए आपने कौन से कदम उठाए हैं?

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: As I stated, in my reply to the earlier supplementary, the Government of India is mainly procuring 90-95 per cent of wheat and rice. But where the States want to procure, like, groundnuts, we will help them. Today itself I will get in touch with the Gujarat Government. If there are problems, we will help them. No doubt about that.

SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Sir, because of bad storage facility, it was reported that several tonnes of rice got burnt in the FCI godowns in Kerala. And the Supreme Court had observed that foodgrains in godowns should be given to the poorest because of lack of proper storage facilities. I would like to know whether the Government has taken any decision to ensure it. Also, what are the reasons for rice getting burnt in the Kerala godowns?

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: The occurrence of non-issuable or damaged foodgrains with FCI is coming down every year in a dramatic manner. The damaged goods in 2000-01 was 1.82 lakh metric tons when we were handling about 80-85 million tonnes. And when we look at the percentages, in 2007-08, the percentage was 0.10. Now it has come down to 0.06. So, we are taking every action to bring down the damages. In Kerala also, there have been some reports and actions have been taken. And, in Kerala, we have got stocks for the next four months for procurement by the PDS.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, this is a very important question. I would also like to remind the House and the Chair that during this entire Session, this is the only question which has been put and which has been answered. It is unfortunate.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rupala and Prof. Thomas got this special privilege!

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, the storage capacity, according to the hon. Minister is 755.89 lakh tonnes. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what the break-up of FCI, break-up of private and then the break-up of covered and non-covered godowns is. I ask this because often it is said that most of it is non-covered and, that is why, it is getting destroyed and causing a huge loss to the exchequer. This is part (i). Part (ii) of my supplementary is this. Is the Central Government trying

to help State Governments to construct godowns in various District Headquarters with some support to them by way of subsidy? Otherwise, when the rice of Punjab goes to Andhra Pradesh, or Andhra rice going somewhere else, etc. we are wasting so much money on transport. That being the case, in every District Headquarter, there has to be storage facility. There should be a national policy on this. Is there any thinking in the Government in this regard? Then, what is the break-up?

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Sir, there are storages covered and there are CAP storages. But CAP storages are not unscientific. They are scientific, and this is especially so for wheat. All over the world, wheat is kept in CAP storages.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, what is the break-up?

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: I come to the break-up. All the States have given the figures. I will give you the total figures.

Sir, the covered godowns owned by the FCI, as of now, is 130 lakh MT. The hired one is 214.95 lakh MT. And, in the case of CAP, it is 26.38 lakh MT owned and hired is about 5.37 lakh MT. So, the total comes to 31.75 lakh MT. With this, the FCI alone has got the storage capacity of 376.9 lakh MT. Then, we have got the storage capacity with the State agencies. So, all put together, it comes to 75-77 million MT.

DR. BHARATKUMAR RAUT: Sir, as hon. Rupala has pointed out, it is a typical babu-type Government reply. It does not reflect the sentiments behind asking the question and the plight of the farmers on the one hand and the consumer on the other. The hon. Minister said that there enough storage facility. I come from Maharashtra. And, in Maharashtra, there have been news items appearing in newspapers that such and such quantity of foodgrains have been rotten because they kept in the open place. Sir, due to rain and dew, the foodgrains have been rotten and are not fit for human consumption. Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is holding itself responsible, or, it is pinning this responsibility on somebody for this kind of State of affairs. It is all happening only because you don't have the storage capacity. It is not that you don't have sufficient godowns. You have warehouses. But, warehouses have been given to private parties or private manufacturers — I can say this with responsibility — to store beer bottles and liquor bottles! As a result, foodgrains does have get place for their storage. You are saying that you have enough space. Yes; technically your reply is correct. You have enough space. But, I would like to know whether foodgrains are stored in covered godowns, or, are they kept in open place and are rotten.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Sir, I can assure the House that not a single godown of the FCI is given to anybody to store any product other than foodgrains. I can assure this to the House. If the hon. Member brings to my notice any storage godown where liquor is stored, we will take the strongest action possible. It may be misunderstood. The Central Warehousing Corporation may have such stocks. The CWC is not with us; it not with the FCI. The Central Warehousing Corporation has different purpose. Sometimes, the CWC might have used it. It is not the FCI. Sir, FCI is the main agency to procure foodgrains and store it. And, in case any information the hon. Member has, I request him to send me the same. I will take action.

The information that has been given by me is after compiling the data. In every State, there is an Advisory Committee. We have made all the operations transparent with one of the senior-most Member of the Parliament of the State as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. There are representatives from the media. They can inspect. And, I am getting the Inspection Reports. If you have got any complaint from any State, you kindly let me know. We will take action. Sir, we have made all the operations transparent. Sir, it is one of the major achievements of the FCI. We have — from major damages and losses earlier — brought it down to 0.07 per cent. It is not a small achievement of the FCI.

DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM: Sir, the hon. Minister is misleading the House. I have a question to ask.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. What can I do? No; please, take your seat. I have requests for supplementaries from Shri Tapan Kumar Sen, Shri Gehlot, Shri Avinash Khanna, Shrimati Vasanthi and others. But, there is restriction of only three supplementaries. So, I am helpless...*(Interruptions)*... I see your enthusiasm for asking supplementaries. If that is so, why should we do away with the Question Hour?

Now, who is benefited by doing away with the Question Hour? Actually, this is the only time, one hour, which we get to make the Ministers accountable. And by cancelling Question Hour, who are benefited? Find out. I am happy to see this interest. Let us show this interest everyday during the Question Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM: I understand the Chairman's view. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री थावर चन्द गहलोत : सर, आज इस सत्र का आखिरी दिन है।...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री सतीश चन्द्र मिश्रा : सर, हाउस अच्छी तरह से चल रहा है। आप उनको सवाल पूछने का मौका दे दीजिए।...*(व्यवधान)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; it is already Chairman's direction. ...*(Interruptions)*... I cannot... ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir, I totally agree with you, but since Shrimati Stanley is retiring, at least, that consideration ought to be there. Some friends from this side... *...(Interruptions)...*

श्री सतीश चन्द्र मिश्रा : सर, आज के दिन तो कम से कम कर ही सकते हैं।...*(व्यवधान)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Deputy Leader and Misraji, see the point is, it is the direction of the hon. Chairman that there will be only three supplementaries. Can I violate that?

श्री थावर चन्द गहलोत : सर, सदन की भावना को ध्यान में रखकर अनुमति दे दीजिए।...*(व्यवधान)...*

DR. NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Sir, as per the Constitution of India, when the Chairman is not in the Chair... *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no; don't bring in such things.

DR. NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Sir, you are in the Chair, you have... *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Najmaji, please.

श्री थावर चन्द गहलोत : सर, सदन की भावना को ध्यान में रखकर अनुमति दे दीजिए।...*(व्यवधान)...*

श्री सतीश चन्द्र मिश्रा : सर, आज के दिन जो आप बोलेंगे, वही रूलिंग होगी।...*(व्यवधान)...* Whatever you say, that will be the ruling. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no; don't bring in such things. Don't compel me.

श्री थावर चन्द गहलोत : सर, आज इस सत्र का आखिरी दिन है।...*(व्यवधान)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please don't compel me.

SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY: Sir, please... *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please don't compel me. *...(Interruptions)...* You see, I will give you another chance. Please don't compel me now. *...(Interruptions)...* Please don't compel me. *...(Interruptions)...*

श्री थावर चन्द गहलोत : सर, खाद्यान्न की सुरक्षा से संबंधित प्रश्न है।...*(व्यवधान)...* आज इस सत्र का आखिरी दिन है।...*(व्यवधान)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have all the support and sympathy with you, but please don't compel me. *...(Interruptions)...* That is the standing instruction of the hon. Chairman. I am not going to violate it. Please don't compel me. *...(Interruptions)...* I have all sympathy and support with you. Let this be an initiative to ensure that hereafter Question Hour will be there.

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