

received from the lower level are headed. This is the situation. The fact reveal us that the trains are not being operated satisfactorily.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Air-conditioning plant was not working well in that train.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You are telling the truth. They switch off the air-conditioning plant. If you want air-conditioning plant to be operated in the trains in Bihar then the presence of some member of Parliament or Railway official is essential in that train. Once I was travelling by Tata Express..... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Nitish ji, air conditioning plant was switched off in that train. It is not functioning for the last one week. A.C. two-tier coach is also not being attached.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : That is also not working .... (*Interruptions*) There is only one A.C. two tier compartment in Tata Express. In your area, Ganga Damodar Express is there. There is an A.C. two tier compartment in it too. There is a Patna Hatiya Express, which is having an A.C. two tier compartment but do you know, if any member of Parliament or Railway official is not travelling in that train, the A.C. starts functioning only after half when the train starts. Even they try to before us that the air conditioning is already functioning. We ourself go and examine whether the air conditioning is functioning or not.

We have to go and check ourselves whether it is at slow speed or high speed or it is only the fan which is moving and get it operated properly. Then, we caution the passengers that it is their money, the expenses of which they are travelling and it is their right and why should they not register complaints, so this is the position.

Now, thanking you I would like to submit that an overall improvement should be made in the whole system for effective running of the trains. I would like to request you while concluding that members of Parliament do not get sufficient time to take part in the divisional Railway Users Consultative Committee meetings themselves held at the divisional level and I therefore request you to kindly nominate a representative of members of Parliament as a matter of policy to this committee so that he may discuss on the day to day affairs at the divisional head quarter level concerning matters relating to the respective Parliamentary constituency of an M.P.

16.00 hrs.

The members may otherwise, pay a visit whenever they get an opportunity to do so. But their representatives meant for this purpose would be doing their job. It is for that reason, I request you to see to it.

What I had submitted last time I am again emphasising that one day every member of Parliament has to become an Ex-MP. So whatever facility, they are getting at present through Lok Sabha is all right as an Ex-MP has got the facility that he can travel by A.C. II tier with his attendant. But my submission is that he should be provided with A.C. first class travelling facility if he travels alone.

While concluding I hope that you would take note of these points and take appropriate action. Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for having an opportunity to me to speak.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Tommorrow is Friday and I have to go out of Delhi tomorrow. The discussion which remained inconclusive today, should be taken up on Monday instead of tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Speaker would decide this issue.

16.02 hrs.

## DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

### Need for Streamlining the Public Distribution System

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we shall take up the item No. 16 — Discussion Under Rule 193 on the need for streamlining the Public Distribution System.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Madam, Chairperson, I rise to raise a discussion on the need for streamlining the Public Distribution System under Rule 193.

The Public Distribution System is a welfare measure of our Government meant to serve the poor people and the common man. The Public Distribution System is in practice, in vogue in our country after Independence since early Fifties. Of course from time to time, it has undergone some changes here and there in different States to suit to the local requirements. The Government of India also, from time to time, has brought out guidelines to streamline the system.

Ours being an agricultural country and a vast country, the entire food requirement or requirement or essential commodities of the total population cannot be met by the Government through the Public Distribution System. Only a small fraction, a small portion of the requirement of the people is met through this system. Basically it is meant to provide succour to the poor people; to the needy people, Whenever scarcity condition developes in any part of the State, there also the State Government strengthens the

[Shri Sriballav Panigrahi]

system. In urban areas also when rice, wheat are not available in the required quantity, the requirement of the people who work in industries and other poor people is taken into account by the Government and accordingly provision is made. So, in this way, the interest of the vulnerable section of people, the poor people is kept uppermost in mind while running the public distribution system.

We have a network of more than 4.35 lakh fair price shops located throughout the length and breadth of our country wherein rice and wheat, together with sugar, are made available. Of course, kerosene is also supplied through the public distribution system. There are six items which are treated as essential commodities and are supposed to be made available in our public distribution system. They are rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene, edible oil and soap. In early 1991-92 the PDS was further strengthened and a new scheme called Revamped Public Distribution System was started. I think in as many as 1782 blocks mostly in the tribal areas the RPDS was provided for. In the RPDS I think rice at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg. was made available. Furthermore, some additional items like tea, soap, cloth etc. were also made available. But last year, from the 1st of June we have another system, a modified public distribution system known as Targeted Public Distribution System, TRPD has been started. I think this was the brain child of our former Prime Minister, Shri Deve Gowda, who from the ramparts of Red Fort announced it on the occasion of the last Independence Day. Later on there was a Chief Ministers' Conference to debate on it. This was to be implemented from the Republic Day of 1997. But I do not think it was implemented from that date. I think it was implemented from the 1st of June in different States.

The highlights of the Targeted Public Distribution System are: 'States to identify families Below the Poverty Line, who would be issued 10 kgs. of foodgrains per month per family at prices less than the Central Issue Price' - this is the main characteristic feature of the TPDS; the population above the poverty line (non-poor) now under PDS to continue to receive normal entitlement at the full CIP; supply of foodgrains for the BPL at 10 kgs. per month per family shall be guaranteed to States by the Centre. Additional quantities required by States would depend on the availability of stocks in the Central Pool.' These are the highlights of the new targeted public distribution system, which is called 'Targeted Public Distribution System'.

16.11 hrs

[SHRI NITISH KUMAR *in the Chair*]

This Targeted Public Distribution System is supposed to target eradication of poverty but I believe, the way it has been formulated and the way it is being implemented, instead of targeting at eradication of poverty, it is targeting at politics. As I said, according to this, 10 kgs. of foodgrains

are to be provided to a family below the poverty line per month. Naturally, the number of families below the poverty line becomes very important.

The requirement of foodgrains varies from State to State. There is a change in the procedure that was adopted earlier. The average of the last ten years offtake of foodgrains by the respective States is now made the basis. After that figure is obtained, the number of families below the poverty line is to be given ten kg. of foodgrains per month. This is clear from that. The rest of it is given for consumption by people belonging to other categories. This is in clear violation of item No. 2 of the highlights, that is, population above the poverty line - non-poor - now under PDS to continue to receive normal entitlement at the full Central Issue Price'. It is not being followed. This is very clearly a violation of whatever was the consensus at the Chief Ministers' Conference; it is a violation of whatever was the understanding given.

What is the impact of this new public distribution system? I would say, it is horrible. I do not know why the Government of India is pursuing this. No State has welcomed it. I would like the hon. Minister to reply to this. Which are the States that have welcomed this new public distribution system, the Targeted Public Distribution System? Here are Press clippings to show what every State feels. Bihar says, 'It is horrible'; Orissa is the worst hit State.

With your permission, I would like to quote a few Chief Ministers or Food Ministers of the States on what they say about the new public distribution system. To start with, we have yesterday seen a scene here.

Now, let us see what the Minister of Food of West Bengal Government, Shri Kalimuddin Shams, had to say about this Targeted Public Distribution System. According to him:

"Instead of helping people below the poverty line, the scheme was giving them more discomfort with less amount of food grains and that too, not at the expected cheap rates"

His Oriya counterpart, Shri Habibullah Khan said:

"The Targeted Public Distribution System has put the Orissa Government in a quandary".

He further says:

"The new TPDS would only assist people below the poverty line in a nominal way for they will be given only 10 kg rice at the rate of Rs. 4 a kg. Whereas the Planning Commission estimates, being followed by the Union Government, put the number of BPL families in Orissa at 32 lakhs, State surveys put it at 43 lakhs."

Sir, I would like to say that the impact is horrible on the State of Orissa. I will speak in detail about that a little later. Now, let us see what the Governments of other States have to say on this.

A report from Jaipur said that the Rajasthan Government was not happy with the scheme and had raised the matter with the Centre. Prof. Kamal Kabra of the Indian Institute of Public Affairs and an expert on PDS, said that the new scheme was inherently flawed in that it was "too centralised, too general and too aggregative... the macro estimates which the Central Government is following, may not tally with the existing ground realities. "Mr. Minister, this is not a political view. I am only quoting what an expert had said on this scheme. You have ignored the ground realities altogether. Sitting in the air-conditioned chamber, I do not know, how some economists brought out this formula on the basis of which the number of BPL families are estimated in the States.

Sir, then I will quote what Maharashtra's Secretary for Food and Civil Supplies, J.M. Phatak said about the scheme:

"The ceiling of 60.45 lakh BPL families imposed by the Centre was inadequate as the States has already identified 43 lakh families with an annual income less than Rs. 4,000 and 77 lakh families with an income less than Rs. 11,000. A family is BPL if its income is less than Rs. 15,000".

Similar is the case with the Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh Governments. Gujarat spends Rs. 77 crore annually in providing 32.6 lakh BPL families 12.5 kg wheat at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg as against 19.95 lakh households proposed by the Centre. This has adversely affected the States. Sir, all of us know that it is the basic and essential need of the people. Poor people spend 75 per cent of their income on food.

They do not have more than 25 per cent to spend on other items. No State welcomes this Scheme.

Now, I would like to come to the State of Orissa. Our State also has vehemently protested against the implementation of this Scheme. The Minister in the Orissa Government rushed to Delhi; the Chief Minister also has addressed several communications to the Minister of Food and also to the hon. Prime Minister. Further, when the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Gujral, visited Orissa, our Chief Minister discussed this matter with him and the Prime Minister promised and assured him that the Government would sympathetically consider the case of Orissa particularly when the State was very poor and a backward State and was still reeling under the severity of drought. Added to this, floods have aggravated the situation further.

Sir, hitherto, the State of Orissa was getting one lakh tonnes of rice and 50,000 MT of wheat every month from the Centre against the quota of 1,50,000 tonnes of foodgrains. This was the allotted quota for the State. This quantity was released to the State prior to this policy. Now, suddenly, the State has become entitled to a paltry quantity of 35,000 MT of foodgrains. I do not know as to what is the logic and justification that has driven the Government of

India to fix this quantity of 35,000 MT of foodgrains for our State. If we compare the intake of the State during the last ten years, then this is a very unrealistic quantity for a State like Orissa. Till very recently, the intake of the State was roughly about one lakh tonnes. But if you consider the position for ten years since, then it would be seen that earlier there was hardly any difference between the prices of the PDS to those of the open market. So, there was no pressure. Now the Government says that this was the average of the intake of the last ten years. How unrealistic is this estimate!

Sir, now the total allocation for the State would be 4.26 lakh MT per year and the monthly allocation thus comes to 35,000 MT. Out of this 4.26 lakh MT, 3.81 lakh MT would be meant for the BPL people, the Below Poverty Line people; and the rest 45,000 MT would be meant for the ABL, the Above Poverty Line people. This is the allocation for the whole year. So, hardly anything is left for the people Above the Poverty Line (ABL).

Sir, on the other side of it, the Government of Orissa, on its own, is running a programme called the 'Liberation from Hunger' programme. Out of 315 blocks in the State, this scheme has been extended to 143 blocks. Under this scheme, ten Kg. rice per family is given at the rate of Rs. 2/- per kg. Another ten Kg. is given at the rate of Rs. 5.12 per kg. Five Kg. wheat is given at the rate of Rs. 3.78 per kg. For the next 30 Kg. they depend on the open market availability. On the lower side, the monthly requirement of a standard family is 55 Kg. and this is how it is given. A family has to spend Rs. 330 per month on rice and wheat.

Now, according to the Deve Gowda formula, the *Bhoomiputra* formula, how does the much publicised TPDS help? Ten Kg. of rice is given at Rs. 2/- per Kg. The people would have to purchase the rest of the quantity from the open market, which sells at Rs. 8/- per Kg. So in all, the consumer has to spend Rs. 388 per month and so the poor people would have to spend Rs. 50/- more per family under this Scheme.

Thus, there is a difference of Rs. 50 per month for a poor family. This is the outcome, Mr. Minister of your new TPDS. It is horrible. I would request him to kindly withdraw this scheme forthwith. I will be happy to be contradicted. I have given the figures.

There is another disastrous effect of TPDS on market prices of rice and wheat, etc. What they are giving is, about 35,000 metric tonnes, of only rice and not a grain of wheat. There is so much of publicity for the last ten years for consuming wheat. So Orissa fell in line with that and they have been lifting 55,000 tonnes every month. There are about 6,400 *chakkis* in Orissa, they will all remain idle now. Flour mills are there but they belong to rich people. But people who own *chakkis* are not so rich. For wheat they have to depend on Haryana and Punjab. Some traders are also there who are exploiting the situation. That is the situation there in Orissa.

[Shri Sriballav Panigrahi]

I would now touch upon the system of fixation of estimate of people living below poverty line. How they do it? A door to door survey was conducted by DRDA. As you know, Sir, DRDA is the agency in the district for implementation of all poverty alleviation programmes. They prepared a list of beneficiaries for several anti-poverty programmes. According to them, percentage wise, 78 per cent people and items of family, 43 lakh families are entitled to come under Below Poverty Line category.

But according to Prof. Lakdawala and one other expert, on the basis of sample survey, held that only 32 lakh families are entitled to come under BPL category. That is why, I said; that it does not tally with the ground realities. Ground realities are something else, but what they say is something else. This is the disastrous situation Orissa has landed in. Orissa cannot, effectively, meet the situation arising out of natural calamities because of this type of things happening there. The Government of India will have to be held responsible if anything happens there, if any starvation death takes place there. Wherefrom would Orissa get foodgrains to run special feeding programmes.

We have a Prime Minister who first agrees to take action and thereafter he forgets everything. This is the type of situation prevailing in the country. I said that the requirement of the entire population cannot be met. In 1974 I had the fortune or misfortune of having become Orissa's Food and Civil Supplies Minister. I had taken a lot of pain to streamline the Public Distribution System

So this way, as I said, release of sugar, rice and wheat, etc. has a salutary effect on the open market price.

It caters to the requirements of the poor people to some extent. At the same time it has some effects. If PDS is properly run, it regulates the open market price. That way also, the Government has failed.

Now, I come to the anomaly in the allocation of foodgrains to various States and say how discriminatory it is. As far as the Government of India policy is concerned, there is wide discrimination in the allocation of foodgrains from State to State. After meeting the needs of the below poverty line families of the States, the allocation of the remaining foodgrains to the above poverty line population is having wide variation. It is observed that as against the all India annual average of 995 kg per capita, the annual average per capita in respect of the States getting the above poverty line allocation is 388 kg of foodgrains. Against this, Orissa gets a meagre quantity of 13.25 kg of cereals annually in the background of 995 kg per capita in the country ..... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN (Trichur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, there should be some time limit ..... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Actually, he is the Mover of this Discussion.

Shri Sriballav Panigrahi, you have taken 38 minutes. Now, I think, you should wind up your speech.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Sir, I will take another ten minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Perhaps, ten minutes will be too much. Please try to wind up in five minutes.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : I was mentioning as to how there is an anomaly in the allocation of foodgrains to various States. It is highly discriminatory.

In Orissa, we have 64 lakh families coming under PDS and they are spending about Rs. 100 crores from their own funds. It will need another Rs. 30 crore. That is why, Orissa's legitimate demand of getting the share of subsidised foodgrains has to be taken into consideration. All economic indices rank Orissa as one of the poorest States. Under such conditions, food security is to be equated with security to life. Under the TPDS, the objective of the Government of India, is to provide minimal nutritional level and prevent prolonged malnutrition. It is, therefore, important that the Government should not rely upon the statistical data given by Prof. Lakadawala, etc. and it should rely upon the DRDA data.

The Orissa Government was earlier getting one lakh tonnes of rice and 50,000 tonnes of wheat and that has to be restored. That will be fair and proper, just and equitable for the State of Orissa.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will conclude my speech by referring to one or two points.

The hon. Minister may say that the Minister from Orissa came and the Centre is giving 20,000 tonnes of additional quantity of rice. But at what rate is the Centre giving this additional quantity of wheat? I know what answer he will give.

What does the Chief Minister of Orissa say about this? Historically, the PDS has been an effective instrument of market intervention with the purpose of maintaining price stability. What is important is at what rate the Orissa Government is getting this additional quantity of wheat, which the Centre has been kind enough to give. In Orissa, the price of rice in the open market will be around Rs. 8 or Rs. 9 per kg. There is price differentiation. There are four types of prices the Centre is having. One is for 10 kg. quantity; another for the revamped PDS, which is something less, that is 50 paise; another for issue price and then there is the economic rate. The Central Government wants to be liberal by issuing good grains at economic rate.

The other day, when a delegation consisting of MPs from the State of Orissa met him, the Prime Minister said: "There is no problem. There is no dearth of wheat. We will give you sufficient quantity." But the question is : at what

rate is the Centre giving it now and at what rate were we getting it earlier? That is the main point, which has to be taken into consideration. Because of this new approach, in Orissa the prevailing price rice and wheat in the open market will be enhanced.

It will have an adverse effect. That has been made clear in the Chief Minister's letter to the hon. Prime Minister. So, this is our problem.

As far as different States are concerned. I have already mentioned as to how the State Government had reacted and how this policy is not in the interest of the poor people. So, it needs a revision. My request to the Government is that, let them adopt a practical approach, let them have a human approach, and let this new Policy target at poverty alleviation.

I do not know what is the strategy they adopted Bihar and Orissa are poverty ridden states and they are on an equal footing. But Bihar has stood to gain by 20 per cent. However, the Orissa is worst-affected by this Policy. So let them reconsider and withdraw this new Policy. As Orissa is passing through a crisis like natural calamities, etc. they will have to take a very liberal view.

Again I want to say that whenever there are different prices, they breed corruption. So, to make the Public Distribution System very effective, vigilant actions are necessary. The Government has to be vigilant and Vigilance Committees have to be formed. So starting from the fair price shop level up to district level, State-level watch dog Committees can be formed.

Sir I am reminded of what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used to say in the first stage of Independence that blackmarketeers should be hanged at the nearest electric pole. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia) : That remains a memorable quotation. But it had never been implemented.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : At least you start implementing it in West Bengal. We will follow you. ... (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Panigrahi, please conclude now.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Sir, I am concluding. So, very stern action is required to be taken against those who indulge in blackmarketing, etc. Consumer movement is the need of the hour. It has to be built up at the same time we have also to be realistic.

Even if some *sanyashi* from the Ramakrishna Mission are entrusted with this task, with the present level of commission rate and transportation charges, they can not run the fair price shop on no-profit-no-loss basis. So, it has to be quite reasonable. That is why, during our time, we used to give something higher to the panchayats and

cooperatives. We also requested them to run these shops efficiently. So, more allocation to the States is required.

As far as sugar is concerned, there is a big discrepancy in the matter of allocation, rate of distribution as well as quantity for poor men. The poor people should get more.

As regards sugar, at least in the villages, poor people do not get anything. It is just a mockery, giving half a kilogram for the whole month or one kilogram for the whole month as against five kilograms, ten kilograms or something like that given to the rich people. So, there should be upward revision in the quantity. The Public Distribution System has taken birth in our country to help the poor people, the needy people and the common people and to provide succour to them.

In the case of natural calamities also, we have now switched over from the realities. We are pursuing such a new system that it is really the poor States and the poorer sections of the people in such States who are going to be the worst victims. That is why I earnestly appeal to the Government, through the Minister present here, to look at it afresh from the realistic point of view and from a humane point of view and take corrective measures immediately, which is the need of the hour, as different State Governments have come before the Government of India with similar requests.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA (Bombay-South) : Hon'ble Chariman, Sir I am trying to associate myself with the views expressed here by hon'ble member Shri Panigrahi on the Public Distribution System. One thing is clear that no administration can feed a child in the manner and with such love and affection with which his mother feeds him. One of the reasons for this is that today people are fed up with the politics and they want to remain aloof but I want to convey to all the mothers of the country that whatever efforts they may do to remain aloof from politics, the politics has found place in their hearths. If the Government provide them the rice, they will prepare Khichri out of that and if the Government provide them wheat then they will be able to prepare chapaties. Hence the politics has encompassed the whole household. I take it as my duty and I feel privileged to deliberate on this matter. The Central Government and the State Government have a joint responsibility for running the public distribution system. About 4 lakh 31 thousand fair price shops have been opened throughout India to distribute the grains. Out of those only 90 thousand fair price shops are located in the Urban areas and about three and half lakh fair price shops are located in the rural areas all over India. I would like to tell here that the State Governments distribute the same quota which has been released to them by the Central Government. But if less quota is released by the Central Government the State Government cannot distribute the foodgrains in sufficient quantity so the major responsibility lies on the Central Government and only the responsibility

[Smt. Jayawanti Navinchandra Mehta]

for distribution lies with the state Governments. I am compelled to say that the quota which is released by the Central Government through Food Corporation of India for the State Government is of sub-standard quality. They do not get foodgrains worthy for human consumption and varied complaints regarding the quality of the foodgrains continue to come from every State. Besides, the quota has been prescribed by the Centre usually remains on the paper only. When the State Governments approach the Food Corporation of India to receive their prescribed quota they do not even get that in sufficient quantity.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to say this thing here with pride that when Bhartiya Janata Party and Shiv Sena Government came to power in Maharashtra, it had made a promise to eight and a half crore people of Maharashtra. In March, 1995 they promised that Union Government may increase the rates of these five things being distributed through the Public Distribution System, but the State Government of Maharashtra would not increase the rates of these commodities and Maharashtra Government is still fulfilling its commitment. Even today these five commodities i.e. wheat, rice, sugar, edible oil and kerosene are being made available to the public at a controlled cheaper price by the Maharashtra Government as it was in 1995. This is certainly an appreciable thing. None of the States of the country has been able to fulfil its commitment. I would like to say that it is a subject of human hunger, not a subject of politics. We need to keep this thing in mind.

Recently, from first June, the Public Distribution System has been implemented. Initially, I was feeling happy, while saying that 35 crore population of the country, who are living below the poverty line, would certainly get benefit from this type of system. Many schemes of various types are formulated, but the result always remains the same. Poor people do not get any benefit from those schemes, rather directly and indirectly, injustice is done with them. We have seen it through this type of scheme. The reason behind it is that if you go to shops under this scheme, you will find corruption over there. Foodgrains which are available there are not consumable. Complete disorder exists on the shops. Not only this when someone goes to buy foodgrains, he is told that foodgrains are not available and asked to come after two days. If he goes there after two days, he is told that foodgrains have come but now it has been finished. In this way, shopkeepers have a tendency to distribute less and save more. I agree to the point of hon. Mr. Panigrahi. I would like to say it again that the commission, which the shopkeepers are getting is very less, therefore, they give less quantity of grains to the card holders and manage their expenses by selling the saved (blocked) grains in the black-market. It causes injustice to the people living below the poverty line.

I want to tell one more thing. If we talk of giving wheat and rice at a cheaper price, Hon. Minister Sir, please listen to me carefully. I request that rice should be supplied in the

hilly areas as wheat grinding mills are not available there. They consume more rice in their food. Therefore, wheat supplied there will not be consumed. Therefore, rice should be provided to the people who like to eat rice and wheat should be provided to those who like to eat wheat. There is a need to take this type of scheme. At the ration shop, they do not get both the things at the same time. Sometimes when rice is available they are told to come next day for wheat. They have to stand in separate queues for different commodities and in this way many hours are taken in getting ration. If the cardholders have to stand in a queue in the same manner as beggars beg, then this is a matter of shame.

Price should not be increased under the scheme which has been implemented from first June. There should be a control on the price, as the Maharashtra Government has done. But when the prices of grains increase in the market, you also increase the rates of the grains under the Public Distribution System. What I mean to say is that the prices of grains under this scheme should be controlled. It should not be increased. I would like to request you to give assurance in this regard in this discussion.

You have to think about the scheme of distribution after having a trial on all the aspects of the scheme. For last few years there has been talk in all the States that ration cards would be issued in two colours. It has become an old thing. But when we talk of the PDS, I would like to say that the Union Government should do justice in this regard. Through this discussion, I would like to demand that the ration cards in two different colours should be issued at the earliest because rich people do not take ration. Ration card is only a document for them. But it is essential to take foodgrains, kerosene and sugar for the poor. Therefore, I would like to say that introducing scheme of ration cards in two colours should be considered because it is a document for the rich but it is one of the means of feeding to hungry stomachs for the poor. I admit that an expeditious action is needed in this regard.

Targeted PDS scheme has been implemented in Maharashtra and I would like to say that Maharashtra Government has also started it from first June. I wanted to say that Maharashtra Government has conducted a survey under the Integrated Rural Development Scheme from 1990 to 1993 and from this survey they found that at least 77 lakh families were living below poverty line. If the survey report of those 77 lakh families is available. Foodgrains must be made available to them. But the Union Government allocate only 60 lakh and 45 thousand metric tonnes of foodgrains for them. Now if you provide 60 lakh 45 thousand tonnes for 77 lakh people then how could we give the benefit of the scheme to the remaining 17 lakh people. We will not be able to provide this benefit to them, therefore, as Panigrahi ji has given the data related to all the states, similarly, I would also like to request you that all the States including Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan have stated that since launching of this scheme, the quota which the States were getting, has been reduced and in this way, it is an injustice

to the poor. You need to reconsider it. I would like to tell you that 44 per cent population of Maharashtra State is residing in the extension area of the towns and 30 lakh families are living below the poverty line. In remaining 40 per cent civil area, the number of people living in the slums (Jhuggi-Jhonpari) is quite high. There are around 30 lakh families. You have to include them in the number of people living below poverty line and only after that we can distribute foodgrains to them, Maharashtra Government has adopted these criteria. They have included those people in the number of people living below poverty line, who are card holders and living in slums of metropolis. Secondly those who are not having gas connections have also been included in the number of persons living below poverty line. Thirdly, the people who have been registered as people living below poverty line in rural areas, have also been included in it. Through you, I would like to say that quota which has been distributed is very less. There is a need to increase the same.

I would like to tell that the Maharashtra Government should get 20 lakh metric tonnes of food grains each year under this scheme. The Government have earmarked a quota of 14.89 lakh metric tonnes annually against the above requirement of foodgrains you can now ponder over the fact how the Maharashtra Government could do justice with the people living below poverty line when it is facing a Shortage of at least 7 lakh tonnes of foodgrains. There are about 180 lakh ration card holders in Maharashtra as of now. But if you talk about providing foodgrains at half of the normal prices 64 thousand metric tonnes of foodgrains would be required each month even for about 120 lakh card holders and that we do not get. Therefore the need of the hour is allocation of more quota for Maharashtra. But you could increase the quota only if the Food Corporation of India has got sufficient reserves of foodgrains if it has not got that much reserves, you can't allocate more quota of foodgrains. So, don't try to lure people by launching such schemes whereas the real thing is that people should get so much of foodgrains under this scheme that they do not remain hungry, this is what I wanted to urge upon you.

The Uttar Pradesh Government has also put forward the same point as is put forward by the Maharashtra Government. Because the Uttar Pradesh Government has to provide eight kilograms of rice and ten kilograms of wheat under this scheme as has been decided by them. But it is a matter of regret that the Government have allocated only 3.91 lakh tonnes of foodgrains to the U.P. Government for those living below the poverty line. I would like to tell you that they require 15,36,077 tonnes annually for this purpose and the quota of foodgrains allocated to them is far below their requirements.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to make a mention of sugar before the hon. Minister. The quota of sugar being provided to the State Governments is based on the population of 1990-91. This is a very serious matter the Government should allocate sugar-quota on the basis of population of every five years in view of the increasing population all over the country. The year 1997 is in progress. In view of

this, the quota of sugar for the State Governments should be increased. This is the month of Shravana. Many of festivals starts from this month. More quota of sugar is provided during festival seasons but at times that increased quota is provided at a time when festival is over. And people do not get sugar well in time. Therefore, the quota of sugar should be provided well in time and on regular basis.

Whosoever had been the Food Minister earlier, they had divided 425 grams of sugar per person. I am unable to understand this thing. If I call on you in your chamber, you will ask for a tray of tea and the sugar pot along with the tray contains 25 grams of sugar. If we use 25-25 grams of sugar for two times, you can understand that 425 grams of sugar will hardly last for 17 days and not more than that. All people do not suffer from diabetes which may prevent them from using sugar.

16.56 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

If we take sugar from a ration shop. The shopkeeper may weigh 25 grams of less sugar and one can't see through that since 25 grams of sugar would not be even a handful. Therefore you should increase that quota to at least 450 grams per person. And if you do that I will feel that your government has done a good job. And after that a shopkeeper who indulges in weighing less will not do that and people would get 450 grams of sugar. Therefore, if you try to increase that we would be happy. When Morarji Bhai was the Prime Minister we used to get sugar for Rs. 2.30 per kg. at that time. I am telling with deep anguish that the market rate of sugar is Rs. 16 per kg. today whereas you say that there has been a white revolution in the country and we are exporting sugar. But on the other hand, the sugar at the rate of Rs. 16 per kg. is increasingly becoming unaffordable for the common man.

Now I would like to draw your attention towards edible oil. When Morarjibhai was the Prime Minister, the palmolen oil used to be sold at the rate of Rs. 8.15 per kg. But if we have a look at the government's rate, as you say, it is Rs. 32 per kg. today. But we have to purchase it at the rate of Rs. 40 per kg. by the time it reaches us. I would like to tell that the Union Government supply edible oil in time and it is not possible to sell them directly. But if this is available in the packing of half a kg. or one kg. we can sell them to general public easily and this will also not result in the wastage of edible oil at the time of selling.

A union despatch dated 1st April, 1997 was addressed to the Maharashtra Government wherein they were apprised of the discontinuing of further allocation of oil to them as the oil stock for the State has been exhausted and in case that was available, the same would be allocated during the festival season. The hopeful card holders go to at shop with great expectation but to their dismay they are told of short availability or non-availability of the commodity.

[Smt. Jayawanti Navinchandra Mehta]

In such a situation the State Governments find themselves in a very precarious position. Finally, I would like to dwell to some extent on the issue of Kerosene which is indeed a necessity. Maharashtra should be allocated 2 lakh litres oil per month but the quantity you have been allocating is not sufficient even to light up an earthen lamp. From this point of view also there is a need to get rid of the present lacunae of Public Distribution System and streamline it.

17.00 hrs.

The point I want to make is that the Public Distribution System should be reviewed and geared up. Keeping in view the interests of the various people right from producer to the ultimate consumer, we would have to evolve a scheme containing some policy measures aimed at making the system more effective. That is why I would like to see the Government to come out with a white paper on this subject and avoid possibility of becoming a blackcrow in people's eyes and also posing it as a responsible Union Government.

I would also like to point out that the centre is the Chief organiser in this case. It does not behove them if they just go on making hollow promises and announcing contradictory schemes and, at the same time, try to conceal them under the garb of people's benefactor because hunger cannot be taken for a toy.

At last, I would like to recite a urdu couplet :

"Aisee Yojanaon se haquikat chhup nahin sakati,

Haquikat chhup nahin sakati, en banavat ke ossulayon se,

Khushabu aa nahin skati, 'en kagaz ke phullon se."

That is to say :

"The real conntenance of such schemes cannot remain concealed for long behind the veil. The fragrance can't be denied by propounding false concepts of fragrance. The Paper flower can smell the scent. But not the real fragrance."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: While pressing the bell, I was a bit apprehensive that it might make the sugar bitter.

[English]

SHRI V. V. RAGHAVAN (Trichur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, one of the most important items in the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front Government is the strengthening of the Public Distribution System. The prices of foodgrains and essential commodities are rising. To check the price rise, strengthening the Public Distribution System is the only way out.

The most important reason why our people are suffering

is the price rise. So, every effort should be made to check the price rise. We should be able to intervene in the market, at least, to the extent of 22-25 per cent through this Public Distribution System. But I am sorry to say that, at present, the market intervention through this Public Distribution System is less than five per cent. The market is controlled entirely by the private dealers. Price rise is one of the most important problems which the people are facing.

To check the Price-rise the Government has to see to it that the public distribution system is further strengthened.

It is welcome that the Government has initiated some steps to give some concessions to the people below the poverty line. In that scheme also, there are some defects. It has already been pointed out that those defects should be rectified and that concession should continue. They deserve special concessions in our country at present because they are the poorest of the poor. That alone would not check the price rise. Our experience in Kerala is that if we are able to intervene in the market upto 20 per cent or 25 per cent, we can check the price rise. We, a tiny State in the farthest end of our country inhabited by 30 million people, have a well-knit public distribution system from the days of the Maharajas. Every household has a ration card the achievement in the health sector is appreciated. The average life span of Keralites is 70 years. One of the reasons for this is the well-knit public distribution system. We guarantee certain limit of foodgrains to the needy families. At present, after this new scheme, we are the most affected State. We are the sufferers. From the days of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Kerala has been receiving special consideration. Panditji gave us a written assurance that supply of foodgrains to Kerala will be the responsibility of the Centre. This is not out of any sympathy towards us. Our agricultural economy is based on cash crops. This contributes to a great extent to the valuable foreign exchange for the nation. Economists say " You go on with the cash crop cultivation. Panditji also said " You go on with the cash crop cultivation. The foodgrain supply will be made sure by the Centre." That was the written commitment by not less a person than our former Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. That special consideration, is now over looked. I know the present Food Minister is very much aware of it and he is sympathetic towards us, but mere sympathy will not suffice.

Our requirement is 2.4 million tonnes. For the last so many years, we have been getting, not complete but 90 per cent or 85 per cent of the total requirement from the Central Government.

Last year, the offtake was two million tonnes, that is, 20 lakh tonnes. Our hon. Food Minister knows that after launching the new scheme, the supply has been cut down to 1.7 million tonnes, that is, 17 lakh tonnes. Once it was reduced from 24 lakh tonnes to 20 lakh tonnes and again it was reduced from 20 lakh tonnes to 17 lakh tonnes. I must say that this is a cruel discrimination done to us by the Central Government. You cannot overlook the written



assurance given by our esteemed leader Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The food Minister now says that the Government can supply foodgrains, but over and above the 17 lakh tonnes, we have to pay the market price. But that is not the way to strengthen the Public Distribution System.

I am told that in some meetings, the present supply to each State is calculated keeping in mind the last ten years offtake. Taking into account the average of the last ten years may be right in respect of some States. But as far as Kerala is concerned, it may not be correct. During the last ten years, there were some periods when rice was available in plenty in the open market in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and other parts of the country and the prices went down. During such periods, perhaps, there might be some lesser offtake. But calculating it on that basis and cutting down our quota this time is a very discriminatory act. We could not carry on with the Public Distribution System with the reduced quota. So, our request is that as promised by the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, there must be a special consideration to Kerala. That is our contention. It was there from 1947 onwards. It was continuing till recently. There are some special considerations given to States like Kerala which produce cash crops to fetch foreign exchange and to the North-Eastern States. Please do not club together Kerala and North-Eastern States with other states. This is injustice done to us. If you club together Kerala with other States on the average basis, then you are breaking the special consideration guaranteed to the State Government by the Centre. I believe and I hope that the United Front Government will not break this special consideration which we were enjoying from 1947 onwards because of our peculiar agricultural economy.

Sir, we are continuing it on the advice of the Central Government to fetch foreign exchange. Our rice cultivation is less than one-third of our total requirement. The economy is based on cash crops. So, we hope and expect that the present Government - and the hon. Food Minister - will continue the special consideration given to us and give us at least two million tonnes just to keep the Public Distribution System going on.

Next month, that is, from 14th September onwards, the people of Kerala will be celebrating our Onam festival. The festival runs for four days. I invite respected Deputy-Speaker and all the Members to Kerala.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will do my best.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : I am inviting all the Members. If you can spend a few days in Kerala during this Onam Festival, it will be a memorable event in your life. People belonging to all religions and castes, the Muslims, the Hindus and other sections of the people celebrate this Onam festival for four days. We used to get special quota of sugar and rice on the occasion of Onam Festival. I would request the hon. Minister to consider our request sympathetically this time also. Please be with us even if the special quota is not released.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If you are inviting me, please ask for some quota of wheat also.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : The Monsoon is very good and our production through out the country will go up. I would draw the attention of the Government that as the availability of foodgrains - good. We have to chalk out a perfect public distribution system throughout the country. The price rise must be checked. You can implement the Report of the Pay Commission, giving more pay and more dearness allowance, but along with it, prices will also go up. Unless you check the price rise, more emoluments, more pay packets will not be able to lift the living standards of people. If you want to raise the living standards of people, the prices must be checked. This is the only way to check the price. The market intervention is only five per cent now. It should be increased to at least 20-25 per cent. If we can do that, we can check the price. I would once again request the hon. Minister, the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister to show a special consideration to Kerala as was there from the days of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

SHRI BALAI CHANDRA RAY (Burdwan) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, one of the most important declarations of the Common Minimum Programme was to strengthen the public distribution system. It had two objectives to fulfil. The first was that through the public distribution system the requirement of foodgrains shall be made available to the poorer sections of the people. The other objective was to achieve price stability through this effective instrument of public distribution system.

Unfortunately, when on 1st June 1997, the Targeted Public Distribution System was inaugurated, there was little suspicion that the declared objective will not be attained or it was not ever thought at that time that the declaration made on the floor of this House, that all sections of the people in India, particularly, India's poor will largely benefit out of this Targeted Public Distribution System. But when the policy was declared and the broad guidelines were handed down, it was clear that what was aimed, was not likely to be achieved. The guidelines had three principle components. First component was that to those who are below the poverty line, who have been identified as BPL, shall receive foodgrains at half the price of Central Issue Price. The quantity was fixed at 10 kg per month per poor family. This was a drastic deviation from the system that was so long prevalent and never thought of that it would be one of the most oppressive result affecting the poor of this little purchasing capacity.

For so long years, from the Public Distribution System, per adult, per week, 1500 grams of foodgrains were distributed which works out to five members family. That had also been taken under the Targetted Public Distribution System as one unit. Before the present Targeted Public Distribution System had come into force, every month either those who are below the poverty line or those who are above the poverty line, that is, both BPL and APL were

[Shri Balai Chandra Ray]

getting 30 kg a month. This was estimated to be the minimum requirement of foodgrains of an average family. This has now been reduced to 10 kg. This is more than modest. Well, the earlier estimate was more than modest ..... (Interruptions).. Presently, the admitted shortfall is 20 kg.

So far as the poor in India are concerned, they have been pushed to the open market to purchase this 20 kg. And in some States, as pointed out by Shri Sriballav Panigrahi, more than 30 to 40 additional kilograms of wheat or rice have to be purchased by the poor in the open market. The result is, one-third of the present Targeted Public Distribution System that makes available to the poor people, shall be at half the tissue price, and two-thirds shall be at the market price which is always above, what they call, the economic price.

The result is that the poorest of the poor under this scheme will have to spend more than 40 per cent to 45 per cent in purchasing foodgrains. This is the first unfortunate result that has come into existence with the operation of Targeted Public Distribution System. The second one is a more disastrous one. It has been provided that the States will be allowed that quantity of foodgrains for distribution which is the average of last 10 years of lifting

Lifting has been diverse and poor in respect of many States for various reasons. Even in West Bengal lifting had been poor because the Food Corporation of India would not be able to release the stock. There are hundreds of bottlenecks. Therefore, lifting has quite often failed. Because of the poor lifting by some States and some States not being able to very successfully implement the PDS earlier, they had obviously lifted shorter quantities than were necessary to meet the needs of the people below poverty line. What happens to them? Those States which are successful in PDS and successful in distributing and lifting, their current requirement again has to be more because if you believe that there has been an incentive in the lowering of the price to half, which at once works as an incentive, the demand will be more. Therefore the successful States will require more. The unsuccessful States will also require more because they will now have better things to offer to the poor. But the Central Government in its policy guideline says that they cannot get it. They will get only the average lifting that they have successfully done during the last ten years. If there is any shortfall in the requirement between the quantity to be distributed to the people below poverty line and the other group of people, that is, people above poverty line, they will have to meet it from their own foodgrains at their own cost. The States are told to do it. They can ask from the Central pool. Then there will not even be an economical price, but a price to be determined according to the total stock the FCI is holding, the cost of purchase they had paid, plus the cost of storage, etc., everything added, just the commercial price. Therefore, if there is a shortfall in the lifting of stocks for the first group

of people and the second group of people and you want to still give it to the poor, to the needy, you have to fall back either on your own store of foodgrains, own resource of the State or on the Central Government on a commercial basis. This will certainly work costly and is working costly. Every Chief Minister has pointed it out.

I can point out immediately figures that will show how disastrous is the difference between the average lifting and the requirement. For instance, Bihar will require for the poor alone, that is, for the people below poverty line, 1030 MT. Their lifting is 527 MT. That means half. Only to provide to the people below poverty line this is what they will be required to lift. But they have to be satisfied with half of that both for BPL and PL. The same is the position with other States. Take for instance Uttar Pradesh; 1145.77 MT will be the need to feed the people below poverty line; they are lifting 661 MT. In the case of other States, even West Bengal had provided per annum for 18 lakh MT. Now we shall be able to get on the basis of average, 14.5 lakh MT. How do we feed those whom we are feeding at the new subsidised price? There is no supply of foodstock from the Central Government to the State for the purpose. With great respect I wish to point out that there has been abolition of Revamped Public Distribution System.

The State of West Bengal was getting 37,000 MT per month under the Revamped Public Distribution System. We have 27 blocks of hilly and tribal areas in the Darjeeling area itself.

As soon as the Revamped Public Distribution System is abolished, the Targeted Public Distribution System is a system wherein we can approach only a small core group. Then, again they are sent to the open market to further their larger needs. Two-thirds of the needs have to be met by all from the market. This is a totally untenable situation. The declaration in the Common Minimum Programme never aimed at this. The achievement of the objectives has not only failed but if these are continued it would have just the reverse effect; not only an adverse effect but a total inopportune effect on the economy on food security itself.

We were trying to achieve two important objects. We were trying to achieve food security for the poor and the common man through the public distribution system; we were trying to achieve a price stability by the thrust. In the core group of foodgrains supplied at a stabilised, average, commonly acceptable price. Both of these objectives will be destabilised if this system is allowed to be continued as such.

Without further dilating on this, I would only point out another shortcoming of this system. When the issue price was fixed at Rs. 4.12, it was possible that the Central Government had noticed that it was higher than the old issue price. How is it that it has worked it out so? The subsidy that has been granted for food in the Budget is quite a large amount. It has not been equitably distributed on wheat and rice. The result is, common rice, again, is not available to persons above the poverty line.

I must inform the House that 'above the poverty line' is a misnomer, compared to those who are 'below the poverty line'. A person earning Rs. 100 a month may be 'below the poverty line'. But those who are earning Rs. 101 fall under the category 'above the poverty line'. What is the distinction between a person who is earning Rs. 101 per month and a person who is earning Rs. 101 per month? For schemes like this, the artificial line has to be drawn. There is no doubt about it. But if the artificial line is not so shaded as to reach the common man to the largest extent, then, the effect will be that most of the poor will suffer. They are really suffering both on the price front as also in the scale of supply of foodgrains. The price could have been well adjusted and the issue prices could also have been differently fixed.

I want to make one or two suggestions. Of course, these suggestions have also been made by the Chief Minister of West Bengal in a recent letter to the Prime Minister. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to one aspect of the matter. West Bengal and some States are producing a quite good quantity of foodgrains. Earlier, only three States in India - Haryana, part of Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh - were surplus States.

Sir, those States which are now producing and procuring sufficiently should be permitted to hold the stock in their own States and the result would be this stock will not have any carrying cost. The saving of carrying cost that we have to pay can be added to the subsidy. That will give us a chance to lower the price at which we are distributing.

I shall conclude by giving two or three suggestions. The 10 kgs limit should be withdrawn immediately. The old allotment at the lower price and the scale of foodgrains that was used to be given to the poor below the poverty line or above the poverty line must be retained. It should not be reduced to 10 kg. The average of ten years' lifting as the basis for allotment should at once be scrapped. Now, we know the number of persons below the poverty line and above the poverty line. Since we know the requirement, we can allow the States to lift according to their requirement as they were doing earlier. This artificial average and the artificial allotment of 10 kgs should at once be withdrawn. Alternatively, 10 kgs be given at the special subsidised price and 20 kgs be given at the old subsidised price so that the poor will get 30 kgs of foodgrains. The Targeted Public Distribution System can be of some merit only if these corrections are made. Only then will it subserve the purpose mentioned in the Common Minimum Programme. Otherwise, it will be against the poor men's purchasing capacity and poor men's very survival. I hope the necessary corrections would be made.

With these words, I conclude.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I have with me a list of 20 more Members who are all as per the instruction, to speak

today itself. I would like to submit that it would be better if each of you take five minutes to conclude your speech. Though I do not think if all of you would be able to conclude your speeches today.

SHRI SURESH R. JADHAV (Parbhani) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are holding discussion on the motion moved by Shri Sriballav Panigrahi and Shri Subbarami Reddy under Rule 193. The matter relating to the distribution of foodgrains in the country through Public Distribution System has been raised under it by several hon. Members. We are celebrating 50th Anniversary of our Independence. This is a matter of pride for our country and for this House. But the point is that the issues being raised in the House and the discussion that is going on under Rule 193 must be held in proper manner. It is good to have a discussion but it is also important to have the discussion in the meaningful manner. The fact remains that the Public Distribution System need to be strengthened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the discussion being held now does not speak good of the ruling party and there is nothing to be proud of. It does not give good impression either of the present Union Government or of the preceding Governments. I would say it with much anguish that looting in the name of dalits is still on even after 50 years of attaining Independence. The problems of the poor concerning bread, cloth and shelter are not being solved.

It is a pity that we are discussing the problem of unemployment and other problems even after fifty years of Independence. This is not a matter of pride for us. What is the ultimate purpose of the Public Distribution System? Its purpose is to benefit the common man, poor people, people belonging to the Scheduled Tribes, backward classes, those living in hilly areas and to all those 60 per cent people living below the poverty line. You can see today whether it is the ruling party or any other party, they all refer to the poor, they hold discussion in the House in the name of the welfare of the poor, but it is only the parties which prosper along with politicians whereas the poor remain what he is. They become more backward.

We are celebrating 50th Year of our Independence. Had our Public Distribution System been in a good shape, these issues would not have been raised today in the House. It is a matter of regret that we could not strengthen our Public Distribution System. The issues raised by Shri Panigrahi and Jayanti Bahen are all important. If you go to the fair price shops run under the Public Distribution System you may or may not get the commodities you want. Even if these are available they are not of good quality. You will get stone particles in wheat and rice. When the poor go to the fair price shops, they are harassed with the reply that commodities would be available on the next day or the day after that. Commodities like wheat, rice, sugar, kerosene or edible-oil under Public Distribution system are supplied to the State Government by the Union Government. But whatever is supplied by the Union Government, is not distributed properly by State Government. Whatever is

[Shri Suresh R. Jadhav]

allocated by the Union Government that has not been supplied to the State Government so far. I have all the data with me in this regard. I have a data of allocation made to Maharashtra Government by the Central Government. During the current year, 1996-97 Maharashtra was allocated 1010 tonne of wheat whereas the actual supply was only 622.20 tonne. Similarly, the allocation of rice was 580 tonne whereas the actual supply was 410.50 tonne. In case of sugar, the allocation was 410.50 tonne whereas the actual supply was 407.35 tonne. Similar is the case with edible oil. Through you, I would like to ask the Union Government as to what is the reason for the gap between allocation and actual supply. The allocation is made by the Government only on paper. The State Government does not get its share as per the allocation. The Government should look into it. When the State Government go to lift their share, their quota of commodities is not available in the godown. Even if commodities are available, they are not of good quality and at times wagons are not available.....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI SURESH R. JADHAV : I am speaking for the first time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : That is all right, but there is a paucity of time.

SHRI SURESH R. JADHAV : Why there is a gap between the allocation and supply. Through you, I want to know this from the Union Government. There should be some improvement in this regard. The off loading of food grains should be according to its allocation. Shrimati Jayawanti Mehta has spoken at length about the allocation and off take of food grains and other items for Maharashtra under the P.D.S. I would also like to say that Maharashtra has already implemented the new targetted Public Distribution System with effect from June 1, 1997. This scheme is being operated by the U.F. Government under its common Minimum programme and covers 60.45 lakh families. However as per the survey conducted by the Union Government under I.R.D.P. during the year 1992-93. The number of rural families living below the poverty line in Maharashtra is 77 lakhs. Apart from this, the income of 40 percent population of Metro cities like Mumbai is below Rs. 4000. There are 43 lakh such families living in cities of Maharashtra. Thus the number of poor families living below poverty line are about one crore. However, the foodgrains are allocated only for 60.45 lakh families. This creates problems for Maharashtra. I, therefore, would like to request the Union Govt. to make allocation under P.D.S. for one crore families and the foodgrain allocation should be raised to 20 lakh metric tonnes.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please conclude now.

[Translation]

SHRI SURESH R. JADHAV : Kerosene, foodgrains and sugar quota for Maharashtra is also less. Smt. Jaiwanti Mehta has made mention of it.

Through you I would request the Union Government to stream line the P.D.S. so as to provide necessary items to the poor and backward classes living in remote parts including the hilly regions. Whenever the P.D.S. issue is raised in Parliament, everybody says some thing or other, but it is not unfortunate that we are debating on the P.D.S. in the 50th year of the independence.

It is utmost necessary to stream line and revamp the P.D.S. The financial assistance provided by the Union Government to purchase Vehicles should also be enhanced. The financial assistance provided by the Union Government to the state Governments for godowns also needs to be increased. The Government must make all out efforts to revamp and stream line the P.D.S. which was to provide succor to the targetted poor masses.

It is all the more pertinent to operate the P.D.S. efficiently and smoothly as we are a democratic society.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You have spoken for 13 minutes against the allotted time of 5 minutes. Please conclude now.

SHRI SURESH R. JADHAV : I am just concluding. Through you I would request the Union Government to make all out efforts to revamp and stream line the P.D.S., so that we need not discuss this issue again in the House. This is my earnest request to the Government.

SHRI HARBHAJAN LAKHA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for allowing me to speak on the issue of P.D.S. in this august House.

In the 50th year of our independence, independence Day is to fall after a few days. In this country, the public distribution system is in the hands of 15 percent people. Hardly any measure have been taken in this country for welfare of 85 percent people who are in the majority also. At present, 54 percent people are living below the poverty line because the public distribution system is in the hands of 15 percent people. At the time of independence, 27 percent people were below the poverty line as against 54 percent at present. The President in his address stated that 32 crore people are below the poverty line yet we people are all set to celebrate the 50th year of our independence. It is unfortunate for 85 percent people. When majority of people are poor, there is no point in celebrating the 50th

year of independence. Therefore, I ask if this country is independent, then why are these people considered below the poverty line? Why have they been subjected to injustice? It is perhaps because these people are being ill-treated and exploited under the distribution of resources for thousands years. Those privileged and belonging to feudal class are merely 6 percent of population, yet they have grabbed 96 percent of national resources. Those in the ruling class who constitute just 4 percent, control 52 percent of politics but those who are in majority and cast their votes as a national duty do not matter much. These 4 percent people have grabbed up 70 percent jobs which has created great disparities and imbalances in the society.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Lakha ji, you have given a very wide scope to the issue.

SHRI HARBHAJAN LAKHA : I am coming on to the subject. In this country 52 crore people who also cast their votes, have not been included in the privileged class of O.B.C. by this Government. This belief has not been materialised so far in the country that these 52 crore people should also get justice and they should also be given full share in the distribution system. We condemn this attitude in the 50th year of Independence of the country.

Similarly, there is the question of land distribution. Now there is Government of our party in Uttar Pradesh. Previously also there was our Government which lasted for six months. Ms. Mayawati during her tenure, had distributed three lakh acres of land to these people which had set right the public distribution system. And she has taken measures to distribute six lakh acres of land to those people who have been working on fields. People are happy because nobody has been meted out injustice. Ms. Mayawati has put one lakh forty five thousand unlawful people behind the bars, under the Goonda Act, so that they could not suppress those unprivileged people. The work which would have been done in six years, our State Government has completed that work in six months.

The issue being raised here in this House relates to the basic needs on which I would not like to speak since one can survive for some period even without them. I along with the Chairman of the labour consultative committee has visited Guwahati. It rains very heavily there. People there set work for only six days in a month and the daily wages for a family is only Rs. 21. A family consists of four members. In a family which gets only Rs. 126 monthly in this country, how could they survive on this meagre amount. We visited Bihar also, people get only Rs. 27 per day whereas we eat food for Rs. 126 at a time. Many people in this country do not have a roof and have no means of livelihood and they do not have any arrangement for teaching of their children. In such a country we give the slogan - 'Sare Jahan se achha Hindustan hamara' that is to say our country is most beautiful in the world. In a country where a family of four members get only Rs. 126 in a month, how can the country progress. Is there a similar situation in any other country? In other parts of the world, the

Government makes arrangement for food, cloth and shelter and other basic necessities of life for the common masses. But our Government could not do anything through public distribution system.

There are 26 lakh Government employees in our country. They are only 1.5 per cent of total population but the Government have not formulated any policy for the benefit of the remaining 98.5 per cent people living below the poverty line. We formulate common minimum programme but that remains only on papers. A special component programme was formulated for the poor but it was not implemented anywhere in the country. Our Minister say that it has been launched in Mumbai, Gujarat and Punjab but as a matter of fact it is not launched anywhere. These Ministers\* only speak in the meetings and virtually they do nothing.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : This work may be expunged from the proceedings of the House.

SHRI HARBHAJAN LAKHA : I will conclude my speech after saying one more thing.

18.00 hrs.

There are about 32 lakh educated people today in the country who are living below the poverty line. And among them are those who had passed MA, BA and some other are matriculate. If one thousand rupees are given to those who are MA, eight hundred rupees to those who are BA and six hundred rupees to those who are matriculate, they would benefit a lot since it is not their fault. On the other hand the Government are at fault because the Government has not provided them jobs, it has not made any arrangement for their livelihood, it is the responsibility of the Government to look after them. It is the responsibility of the Government to make full arrangement for those who are born in the country. There is 90 hectares land which is owned by big people which is not being distributed ..... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH (Vidisha) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is six O' clock and now this debate should be concluded.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The BAC has decided that the House will sit upto 7 O' clock.

SHRI HARBHAJAN LAKHA : The prices of flour, rice and pulses are on the rise ..... (*Interruptions*) can anyone eat bread only in hundred grams of flour? We should ponder over this fact in this House. We should know about the condition of athletes also. Today the gap is widening. The gap between the haves and have nots is widening. The people belonging to the category of have-nots have organised. The people will think over it that what injustice has been done to them and people

\* Expunged from the proceedings as ordered by the Chair.

[Shri Harbhajan Lakha]

- would be ready to implement the public distribution system and the common minimum programme in this country.

I am grateful to you that I am able to put forth my views. I request that this fact should go across all over the country so that people could know about what is happening in the country. I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak about the 'Bahujan Samaj'. Our colleagues are laughing. They are laughing because I have put forward something new and I do not forget old things too. Nobody puts forward new thing in this House. With these words, I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA (Patiala) : Sir, the House is discussing the revamping of Public Distribution System. I think that the poverty is expanding its wings in this country even though fifty years of Independence have since elapsed and it is unfortunate to have discussion over it now. It is pitiable that the poor is becoming poorer and rich more and more affluent in this country. The politicians have formulated certain policies motivated by their political interests to alleviate poverty which benefited the administrative section the most and as for the poor not even the least. In this way the rich became richer and the poor the poorer. Targetted new public distribution policy was introduced. When the budget was being presented by the Government the benches were thumped a lot and it was propagated on AIR and television for one week that poverty would be removed and even the poor would become rich and all such tall claims were made. It was later on found that it was just a molehill below the mountain unearthed. The policy which they adopted pertained to the requirement of atleast 17 million tonnes of wheat and the quantity allocated was only 7.5 million tonnes. When the journalists enquired from hon. Minister it was stated that only 15 per cent procurement took place. We were given a subsidy of Rs. 9200 crore. He stated as to how he could have mobilised funds for more wheat. The target beneficiaries were announced on AIR and television for one week but the beneficiaries had suffered loss instead. Have you ever maintained your accounts? First of all the Government should have made correct calculations and than a policy should have been evolved keeping in view the requirement of funds, the number of beneficiaries the persons to be benefitted and the manner in which they are to be benefitted. They have provided that 10 kg. foodgrain is to be provided at half the price. The rice is priced at 3.50 rupees per kg and it comes to 35 rupees. Earlier, the cost of 30 kg was 161 rupees. Now, 10 kg rice is available for Rs. 35 and the remaining 20 kg is to be purchased from the open market and that would cost Rs. 180. Mr. Minister, you just calculate that earlier it was available for 161 rupees whereas now it costs 215 rupees. How can this policy be considered good one. When we have incurred a loss of rupees 53. All the State Governments in the country are

criticising this policy. Hon. Prime Minister has also called a meeting to enact an amendment therein. There is much uproar among them over the issue of allocation. Now take the example of Punjab State, it is a matter of regret that the giver is demanding. The people of the area growing foodgrains are not getting foodgrains. There are 43.3 lakh yellow card holders in Punjab, whereas 4 lakh people are living below the poverty line. 20 thousand tonnes of foodgrains has been allocated to Punjab whereas Haryana got 87 thousand tonnes. Voice is being raised against this system for the type of discrimination which is being made in this matter. I would like to say that the PDS can never be a success, if the basic problems such as price rising are not solved. You have to identify the problems of both producers and consumers as well.

Sir, the Food Corporation of India makes procurement of rice. The economic cost of Food Corporation of India is the highest in the world. whether any Government had thought as to why the economic cost is so high and why the Food Corporation of India is ever increasing its expenses? This is like a snake squatting guards on gold. Nobody is thinking in terms of improvements in it. Everyday the newspapers carry the reports about the thefts or smuggling of foodgrains.

There is a report from Bangladesh that the foodgrains meant for PDS has been smuggled to Bangladesh. Several lakh tonnes of foodgrains had gone out in smuggling but not a single officer got punishment for that. Nothing of that sort happended. In the same way, had you ever thought about under utilisation of godowns? It is the statement of hon. Minister that the godowns of FCI are under utilised and the capacity of FCI's godowns is 12.4 million tonne whereas out of that 54 percent capacity is utilised and stores taken on rent, are utilised upto 76 percent of their capacity. The first thing is that the stores of the FCI have the foodgrains weighing 11.4 million tonne whereas its capacity is 12.3 million tonnes at present. So, there is infact no need to continue hiring of stores but still they continue to do so. It is therefore quite natural that the cost would be higher and when that goes up, the poor would have to purchase the costly one. In this way, the producer as well as consumer is being looted. It is a matter which needs attention. This position should be improved, then only the Public Distribution System can be brought in between lines. Discriminatory attitude is adopted towards the rice and wheat producing states e.g. Punjab which contributes about 50 per cent rice and 70 per cent of wheat to the Central Pool and yet receives the lowest remuneratory Price as compared to all other states of our country.

We have raised the voice last year and now again we are suggesting to the honourable Minister that if this system has to be improved, then producer should be encouraged. If the producer are dealt with discrimination, then the price of foodgrains will obviously go up. If this system has to be improved, then Government should not make discrimination against the producers. We import foodgrains, but we do not encourage our farmers. The

landing cost of wheat for foreign farmers is Rs. 7100 per quintal whereas it is Rs. 6733 for our farmers. I would like to say that it can be further reduced to Rs. 6000 per quintal. Bungling is a regular feature of this system which involves of extending subsidy worth Rs. 9200 crore for the farmers of the country. Where the urea scam, fodder scam and Bofors scam are taking place one after the other it is difficult, but not impossible to improve the lot of our country. But who will improve it? We have to see the problems of producer and consumers as well. If you can reduce the operating/administrative expenses of food corporation of India, well then only I can assume that the price of foodgrain to be distributed under PDS, can be reduced. I would like to say that only Punjab and Haryana can solve the matter of PDS. Prices can also be brought down, but there is a need to improve the system. At present producers are suffering and the mediators are par taking the lion's share. There is a need to arrest this odd trend.

I would like to add one new thing more, i.e. Public Distribution System should be based on family instead of an individual as on unit. One side we are trying to control the population on the other we are distributing ration on individual basis. Therefore a person having 15 children, takes more sugar and a person having merely 2 children gets only 2 kg. of sugar. The Government should also consider this aspect. As long as the policies are not improved, the slogan of population will remain just a slogan and the poverty will keep on increasing and the country will have to face problems and problems. If the Government is keen to solve the problem, then it will have to take care of these basic problems. The allocation should be made to various regions proportionate to the population. The earlier policy of 30 kg. foodgrains, i.e. before the implementation of present PDS should be maintained, as 10 kg. is not sufficient enough for an individual. If it has to remain at 10 kg. then half of the price should be charged and the rest 20 kg. should be distributed under the earlier system so that the benefit should reach to the targeted person. I would like to conclude with these words and thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH (Vidisha) : Hon. Chairman, Sir, my friend said that the country is about to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Independence. When the freedom struggle was going on, Pandit Ram Prasad Bismal had said, "Oh lord, the day will come, when we will have our own Government; our own sky. We will have the complete independence" But, today Mr. Panigrahi has narrated in the Parliament that Orissa is plagued with starvation. The tribals of Sarguja in Chattisgarh of Madhya Pradesh are not getting foodgrains and other essential commodities of their requirement due to which they are forced to kill monkeys for their food. The tribals of Betul of Madhya Pradesh are eating boiled roots and the leaves of Bhamod tree. This is the scenario after 50 years of independence. Today the common man is suffering due to roaring prices. The situation is such that 32 crore people are cursed to live below the poverty line. They are putting in hard labour but even then their children do not go to school. Their childhood

is being destroyed by engaging them as labour and they become old in an early age. They do not get sufficient food even after toiling the whole day. Shri Dushyant Kumar must have written these lines on their plight.

"Kal numaish mein mila the chithde ek pahne hua,  
Maine puccha naam to bola Hinduostan"

Yesterday I came across a person in rags who told me that his name was 'Hindustan'.

The hapless common man is in a dilemma, what to do and where to go? They can not even have a square meal. Their purchasing power has been reduced. The prices have soared so high, that they were unable to buy essential commodities. We launched public distribution system, but has it been able to achieve the goals. How much foodgrains we received through public distribution system. Just now the Professor from Punjab was saying and earlier Mr. Lakha said that lofty announcement and tall promises are made in this regard but I would like to tell you something about Madhya Pradesh. Whenever I visit my Parliamentary constituency, I find that at many places sugar and kerosene oil is not available. When I ask the Government of Madhya Pradesh, they tell that we get sugar as per the census of 1991, but the population has already increased over these years. Therefore, even if we are willing to provide the ration, we just cannot. Whether our country may or may not have progressed but it has certainly been swelling up in terms of population growth. It is 1997. The quota allocated from the Centre is not upto the required level. I would like to ask whether it is possible to give sugar, kerosene and other ration items to all. This quota should also be increased in proportion to the increase in population. If it is not hiked how it is possible to provide ration to all. I would state the truth. These are trivial things. The Union Government allocates less quota. I would like to read out the figures relating to M.P. we received lesser quota of sugar and kerosene. In Madhya Pradesh 300 gm. sugar is given on one unit. Is it possible to sustain oneself with 5 kg rice and one kg wheat in a month. I would not like to go into the details of it. In our State the situation is such that in its cities, ration items are indeed available to some extent, yet in rural areas sugar kerosene and wheat are the items not to be seen in P.D.S. shops.

Once while travelling my state on foot, I come across an elderly gentleman. He said that he was finding it difficult to sustain in that rule. I asked him as to what has happened to him. He told me that earlier one used to feel tempted for sugar and now the *exorbitant* price of sugar cause tears in one's eyes. These days our children can not enjoy eating even laddoos. I asked him whether he got the P.D.S. sugar. He replied that he had heard of it but never seen it. He has not seen kerosene for years and years together. The State Government allocates the quota at district level but it disappears from there only. Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi used to say that only 15 paise out of a rupee reach the village what to speak of 15 paise here, entire supply disappears and never reaches the rural consumers.

[Shri Shivraj Singh]

In Madhya Pradesh foodgrains, kerosene and sugar are distributed through societies. One society cover about 15-20 villages. There are several villages which are at a distance of 15-20 kms from their respective societies. The moment the labourers come to know that supply of kerosene and sugar has reached at P.D.S. shops, they rush to societies head quartered but find to their dismay that stock of everything has exhausted. That way they lose their one day wage. They visit the P.D.S. shops once or twice and ultimately give up hope but not before uttering out hasty and bad names against the leaders. The Union Government can not leave this matter up to the State Government. The Union Government should see that how the out network of the state functions and whether the P.D.S. items allotted by centre are reaching the ground level. Otherwise it would not work. I would like to request here that P.D.S. shops should be opened in all villages. The smaller villages could be subsumed in 4-6 groups and mobile vans could be used in those areas as you have mentioned in your Economic Report. Wheat, sugar and other essential commodities could be made available in those adivasi areas through mobile vans as they are totally ignorant about the system, whatever commodities such as foodgrain are made available that is rotten and stinking. You talk of JRY. The foodgrains distributed through Employment Assurance Scheme is so much rotten that the labourers readily got agreed to dispose of the same at a distress price. Even animals despise that. Today I enquired from the people of my constituency, then only I came to know that the quota has been allotted but it has not reached there for the want of railway wagons. Would the people starve for the want of rail wagons?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue of targetted PDS was being discussed a little while ago. Just the last year it was announced from the ramparts of the Red Fort with much fanfare and every body too felt reassured that the people living below the poverty line would have enough to eat. Prof. Chandumajra who just telling that our, as many as 32 crore fellow citizens are below the poverty line. I do not want to repeat the figures but certainly like to ask as to how much allocation the Government have made. The poor masses are at loss on both the counts. Earlier 30 kg foodgrains used to be supplied through P.D.S. which has since been slashed. Now, the Government intends to provide 10 kg at half the current rate, however, even that quantity does not reach the people. The Government has not allocated the required quantity of foodgrain. Here announcement for providing 10 kg foodgrains will not do. Through you I would like to tell the Government not to bring politics in foodgrains and also not to arouse people's aspirations whenever you formulate such schemes. Then people naturally feel that their fate is going to be metamorphosed but infact every time they are duped. Now some people would say that this scheme was formulated by Shri Devagowdaji or Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav, but this scheme was declared by the United Front. If you report to such tricks then you are committing treachery

with the country as well as its masses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, how the issue of kerosene comes up. The blue coloured kerosene distributed under P.D.S. is first of all not available and if at all it is found there in black market and diverted to restaurants, hotels etc. But where has gone the white kerosene? The Government had started providing blue kerosene just to avoid adulteration. Various distribution criteria for kerosene are there in various States. When I was going through the figure, I found that it was available more in urban areas than the rural areas. So the villagers not need fuel? Is it not a poor need? Do the villagers consume lesser sugar? Now it is said that the villagers get fuel woods. In adivasi areas, they can not pluck even a leaf, not to speak of collecting wood and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 Prohibits people from felling trees. At that, they are not provided kerosene then how would they sustain? Therefore, I earnestly request the Government to have same distribution norms. When I went through the figures, I came to know that in Chandigarh 20 litres kerosenes given while in M.P. only 3 litres. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Minister who himself hails from the rural area, is well aware of all this. These days it is raining heavily and it is very difficult to reach interiors. The bad weather is taken as an alibi to say that it is difficult to transport the commodities of need in the remote areas. Well, can't the commodities be transported a few months in advance? When you talk of constructing godowns and also pay for that then why can't you make an arrangement for some accommodation where the ration can be stored before hand and the poor man continue to get ration every month? Ration would be made available only if necessary arrangements are made by you otherwise it would not be possible and the entire quota of ration, which is allocated to the poor, would go to the black-market.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir so far as the question of ration cards is concerned I can name several cities of Madhya Pradesh where the number of ration cards exceed the total population. Bogus ration cards are issued and the people are involved in corrupt practices. Otherwise also, our Prime Minister says that the corruption is deep-rooted in the country and he feels himself helpless in this regard. Can't we keep a check on issuing bogus ration cards?

Whether under the new T.P.D.S. about which you are just talking ration cards are issued to the genuine consumers. Have you made any arrangement to check that ration cards are being issued to the genuine consumers and not to others and what is the monitoring system for this purpose? The people can't be left on the mercy of the State-Governments only. You must remove the difficulties and problems being faced by the people. Entire responsibility can not be put on the states only. You must devise some monitoring system so as to ensure that the quota released by you is issued to the very people for whom it is meant. State-level monitoring system should be evolved. Monitoring should be done at the district as well as at the shop level so as to see that the ration is being distributed properly. The states have a complaint that sub-standard and poor quality ration is supplied and that too not



on time. Your statement is that you release the ration but the states do not pick up the same. But this is wrong because States are rather much worried about the rationing stuff to reach their states in time. But still if you feel that these are some bottle necks and the States are not lifting their allotted quota they should be issued warning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have mentioned that Public Distribution system would be implemented in those areas which are prone to famines and have scarcity of food items but I have seen that there are certain regions like the Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh where we have a good paddy crop and the targeted Public Distribution System did not come into force there. These schemes remain on papers only. The poor people did not seem to derive any benefit out of it. So the distribution system be made more effective and the practice of issuing bogus ration-cards should be checked and as you have said godowns for storage of foodgrains should be constructed in those areas. Punjab produces wheat in abundance. But according to you the producer itself has become a beggar. It is quite right that when wheat produced there in abundance, what is the need to bring that here? We also produce wheat. Can't you make any such arrangement under which the wheat can be purchased from that very place where good quality wheat is produced and they may be provide of subsidy. Such an arrangement can be made by the State itself or the district collector concerned. He may purchase the wheat as per the requirement of the district and he can have the good quality wheat there itself. In this way all the expenditure being incurred on transportation and godowns can be saved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon'ble minister has made several announcements and we are celebrating fiftieth anniversary of Independence. The people do not trust the politicians and the freedom has lost meaning to them. So please do not attempt to deceive the common man. You have stated that 10 kg. cereal would be provided at half prices to a family living below poverty line. But since they need 20 kg. of ration to feed them, arrangements may be made to provide 20 kg. of ration. I do not agree with the view of Dr. Saheb that the population has so increased that we do not know what to do and where to go. We can put restrictions on any other things but we cannot deprive them of their right to get both ends meet so, please reintroduce the earlier scheme of 30 kg. while continuing the present system of providing 10 kg. simultaneously ensuring that the ration reaches the people in time.

I conclude my speech while thanking you for having given me the time to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You have given certain good suggestions, so I also thank you.

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA (Salumber) : Honourble, Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank Shri Sriballav Panigrahi for having raised an important issue which gave us an opportunity to discuss the matter under rule 193. Every

member has expressed their views on the subject I will conclude withing 5 minutes. I would just dwell upon the problems being faced by the people of our area. People of any area felt happy on the announcement made by the Government that 10 Kg. of wheat would be issued at cheaper rates to the selected families but they felt otherwise when later they came to know that this 10 kg. of cereal is going to be issued per card holder and not per unit.

We must appreciate that a family normally comprises of 5 persons and in the rural areas they have to cover a distance of 5 to 10 kms on foot for getting their quota of 10 kg and some times he comes back empty handed as an honourable member has stated that everybody knows about it. So one thing is that he losses his wages for that day if he is a wage earner and does not get 10 kg of cereal after reaching there. Secondly the dealer has to keep a separate account for this 10 kg cereal. They have to keep two types of account. First is regarding 10 kg. cereal meant for the selected families and the another one is for others. It is for this reason that he does not take it and he does so knowingly because he does not want to keep double accounts.

[English]

18.31 hrs.

[SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE *in the Chair*]

[Translation]

As if somebody comes for checking and if any minor discrepancy is found, his quota is cancelled. After cancellation of quota, it takes two -three months to revive that quota. So the whole thing remain pending. Therefore the earlier system was good. Of course it involved more money but all the units used to get the quota. As all the members have said, that the earlier system was good. So either the earlier system should continue or the members of the selected families should get 10 kg. per head. Only then it can be termed as beneficial. Every member has expressed their views and I agree to the same. There goes a saying in my area "Hali ka to harza hota hai, aur karjayya ki maut hoti hai" (It means the farmers bear the losses only whereas the borrowers suffer the most). You might not have understood it, this means that it is a fun for one who ploughs but it is a question of death for an ox.

Mr. Chairman, sir everybody talks of the problems of the backward people but there is no timely solution for their problems. The tribal people or the people belonging to backward class, they migrate to cities for work and they hardly earn there sometimes Rs. 25 and some times Rs. 30. I don't want to say that somebody earns more and somebody earns less or who is rich and who is poor, I don't want to go into that. Whatever relief is provided to a poor through the Public Distribution System, he should get that but he does not get that. Since I have said that I will conclude in five minutes, therefore I suggest that problems

[Shri Bheru Lal Meena]

faced by the States should be solved as they have got their own problems like sometimes they do not get allotted quota and if at all they get the allotted quota, they could not lift it due to non-availability of wagons. They face many problems in lifting the allotted quota of foodgrains as a result of which foodgrains do not reach people on time. Secondly, corruption is rampant today in the allocation of foodgrains. Those dealers who grease the palms of those who distribute the quota, they get their quota of foodgrains of good quality. They have to give bribe to the tune of Rs. 100, Rs. 50 and Rs. 10 to clerk, peon and the man who weighs the foodgrains according to the quantum of work involved. If they give them bribe, they get good quality of foodgrains and when good quality of foodgrain is sold through the PDS shops, people happily take them. But those who do not give bribe to them, they get poor quality of foodgrains as has just been mentioned by the hon. member that it is not fit to feed them a cow and they compel the poor to use poor quality foodgrains because they don't have money and therefore they have to eat poor quality foodgrains. And later they say that this has led to epidemic and spread of diseases and say that people have become weak because of these food stuffs. Therefore we people must see that whatever we have decided that must be followed in future also. Several parties made announcements on the eve of elections. Some said that they would provide foodgrains at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg. and they do make such announcement at certain places and the people are carried away by such announcements expecting that they would get foodgrains at cheaper rates. The Deve Gowda Government or the United Front Government when announced that they would provide 10 kg. of foodgrains at cheaper rate, we thought that they would provide it to all the people. But to our dismay we found that 10 kg. of foodgrains was to be provided on per card. Therefore, I want to give stress on two points—either the quantity of foodgrains supplied under the TPDS should be increased and each member of the families selected for this purpose should be given foodgrains at the rate of 10kg. or the old system should be re implemented by bringing improvement therein.

As has been just discussed here that 10 kgs. of foodgrains are provided to the selected families under the TPDS at the rate of Rs. 3 per kg. and people of the general category are provided foodgrains at the rate of Rs. 5 per kg. whereas the rate of wheat in the market ranges from eight to ten rupees per kg. I do not want to go into the price structure in the open market but the foodgrains now provided under the PDS at the rate of Rs. 3 or Rs. 5 in comparison the earlier rate of Rs. 4 per kg. across the board is not good enough but the earlier rate of Rs. 4 kg. was alright. Earlier everybody used to get wheat at the rate of Rs. 4 per kg. but now due to effecting the dual pricing system some irregularities have come to the fore. So either the quantity of wheat supplied under the TPDS should be increased or the old system should be implemented again so that everybody get foodgrains at a uniform rate.

So far as the question of allocation of foodgrains is concerned it should be allotted as per the demand of the respective State governments so that they do not get any chance of saying that the Union Government has not allocated them foodgrains as demanded by them. It is unfortunate that we have a Government of some other party at the centre and government of some other parties at the States and they trade charges against each other and the poor are the ultimate sufferers. As I have said earlier that the poor man is always ultimate victim. With these words, I conclude my speech.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI (Sitamarhi) : Hon'ble chairman, Sir, we are discussing in the House on the Public Distribution System under Rule 193 and many hon. members have put forward their respective views thereon. We are celebrating 50th anniversary or the golden jubilee of Independence this year. I must say that irrespective of the various assertions by politicians and various Governments in power we could not implement the PDS successfully even after 50 years of our Independence. However, the revolutionary steps taken by our United Front government under the common minimum programme in respect of the PDS, people are all praise for it everywhere. It has been provided under this system that ten kgs. of foodgrains will be provided to the poor at half of the normal prices to a red card holder and this system has been implemented at many places. I share the concern of the hon. members that these has been some lacunae and bungling in the matter of issuing such cards.

I want to make this point through you that overall improvement should be brought in the TPDS by removing those lacunae in conforming with the views expressed in the House and by taking into cognizance the reports pouring in from all over the country. Not only improvements are needed but a Committee should also be constituted in the Department itself so as to keep vigil and monitor the scheme formulated by our government for providing 10 kgs. of foodgrains to the poor people of the country at half of the normal prices through TPDS could be fully implemented at the grass root level in villages and all the poor people of the country may be benefited. I admit that there are some lacunae in the scheme.

However, it is said that distribution of foodgrains under the PDS is a state-subject but I don't agree with that. The Government of India should have direct control in the matter of distribution of foodgrains. A number of cases have come to light that lot of bungling is there in the system for providing 10 kgs. of foodgrains to the selected families through cards, under the PDS. The hon. Minister is sitting in the House and I am a Member of Parliament from Sitamarhi, the area he belongs to and I understand that the hon. Minister has knowledge about all the lacunae which are there in this scheme. Today the ration-cards are being issued and the way the norms for the people living below the poverty line has been fixed the 60% families in Bihar are living below the poverty line.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, at the national level the 36% families have been regarded as living below the poverty line and 53% people in Bihar have been considered as those living below the poverty line. Keeping this in view, the red cards have been issued to poor families in Bihar. But the cards given to 53% families do not cover whole of Bihar. These cards must have been given to those who have been registered as the people living below the poverty line, because there are large number of poor families living below the said poverty line.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, 80% poor people live below the poverty-line in Sitamadi constituency to which the hon'ble Minister belongs. When we visit our constituencies after Parliament session, we find group of people in our villages, complaining that while well-to-do and prosperous families have been issued red cards, the poor and deserving people have been deprived of the same. There has been much corruption while providing red cards in Bihar.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as the present government has taken revolutionary decision to enforce T.P.D.S. system, so it should also take revolutionary step to implement the same so that the poor people having red cards may be definitely benefited and these people may get 10 kg. foodgrains at the half rate through the system.

Mr. Chairman Sir, I also support what both Shri Chandu Majara and Shri Bhairu Lal Meena have said I also request that since the poor people are provided only 10kg. out of 30 kg. foodgrains at the half rate, the remaining 20 kg. should be given to them at control rate. If this kind of system is not maintained, the poor people will have to buy remaining foodgrains from the market and this will mar the entire benefit given to them. Therefore I want that the Government should make a change in the system and provide half of 30 kg. foodgrains at half rate and rest at control rate. If you do this only then the poor people of the country will be benefited.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, some hon'ble Member here have pointed out that the earlier system was better because 30 kg. foodgrains used to be provided at control rate by the Government. But this quantity of 30 kg. foodgrains was shown on the paper only. On real terms, the poor people in Bihar never got 30 kg. foodgrains in the past and will not get the same in future either therefore if they get 10 kg. foodgrains, it is good but it would really be beneficial to them if the remaining foodgrains is provided to them on government control rate. The T.P.D.S. scheme of issuing red cards that the government has launched has been formulated by the United Front Government.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to request hon'ble Minister through you to make a special cell to implement this system in the backward states like Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh and start this distribution system under his Ministry directly. It is only after that he will come to know how much poor people get of what is sent to them by the Centre. If it is not done, the middle men will take away the

whole foodgrain and the poor people will get nothing. I therefore, request you to make a special arrangement for its distribution so that this scheme may prove to be beneficial to the poor people.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Naval Kishore Rai, please conclude.

SHRI NAVAL KISHORE RAI : Madam, I will conclude within few minutes. I am the first speaker from my party, Janta Dal on T.P.D.S. I would like to draw the kind attention of hon'ble Minister to Public Distribution System to which some hon'ble members have referred and said that this system is being enforced in a wrong way in some states. This happens solely because the whole responsibility of implementing the system has been left on the state government and then it is said that as it is concerned with state government, the centre can do nothing in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, sir, we are celebrating 50th Anniversary of our independence and the talk of giving everything to our people through P.D.S. But truth lies in the fact that nothing except kerosene oil, sugar, little quantity of wheat and rice really reach to the village. Nothing more than this is provided under the P.D.S. The Public Distribution System has its own essentiality. I would like to urge the Government that 13-14 essential commodities like wheat, rice, flour, vegetables, salt, kerosene, wax, match, soap, edible oil and the oil for external use be brought under the P.D.S. The P.D.S. will be lacking in its purpose unless all these commodities are allocated to States and districts commensurate to their requirement. Even after fifty years of our independence, we have not been able to make these things available under the P.D.S. We would like the Government to ensure the availability of all these commodities. So far as the issue of corruption is concerned, those who are indulged in it ..... (*Interruptions*). We have to see if no commission is given or in case the amount of commission is less, we should enhance it further..... (*Interruptions*). The hon. Minister is present here. I have to ask him a question and so I draw his attention to this matter. He knows about the chaos pervading the entire Bihar. I want that a special status should be accorded to Bihar.

Through you I would like to say.... (*Interruptions*) let not the hon. member disturb me. He may put forth his points when he is asked so. This is not fair. I would also like to submit that in villages the P.D.S. is in a total mess. The situation is such even in this 50th year of our independence my submission is that things should be set right forthwith.

I represent Bihar. I do not want you to say that it is a State matter. If the Central Government provides these commodities to a state, it also becomes its duty to monitor its proper utilisation. The Government can not shirk this responsibility. In States licences are issued for fair price shops. They are at times cancelled just within a year. However later on, the cancellation is revoked when the supply of commodities is resumed. In this way, there is no timely supply of commodities in these centres. Subsequently

[Shri Naval Kishore Rai]

they are not able to get these commodities. The Union Government as well as the State Government have set a consumer forum and certain legal provision has also been made for it. But these laws are not stringent enough. No timely action is taken under these laws. The poor are not aware about the existence of any such consumer forum, where they can lodge their complaints for redressal.

Through you, I would like to request the Government to make the consumer forum as well as the consumer protection acts more comprehensive and more severe. They should be strengthened by more and more awareness be created among the people about them. Moreover, they should be made more effective at Central, State district, block and Panchayat levels by ensuring the participation of elected representatives of all parties from elected bodies whether it is a Panchayat, the Parliament, a State Assembly, a municipal committee or a municipal corporation. I would like to submit that whether it is a State, the Centre, a district, a block or a Gram Panchayat, an All Party monitoring committee should be set up so that cases of corruption, irregularities or favouritism going on in preparation of red cards for P.D.S. and T.P.D.S. may be dispensed with henceforth and thereby the Monitoring Committee may be made more effective. With these words I conclude.

[English]

\*SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY (Tripura West) : Madam, I shall speak in Bengali. This discussion under rule 193 for streamlining and strengthening PDS is timely and very important. Actually this programme was the outcome of the announcement made by our former Prime Minister Shri Deve Gowda in his Independence Day speech from the Red Fort. The sole idea of this new programme was to strengthen PDS so as to give some relief to the poor. In the 50 years of our independence, this discussion on PDS is indeed important. One of the main items of the Common Minimum Programme of United Front Government was to initiate and implement some policy matters with regard to PDS. The scheme was envisaged to strengthen PDS and to provide foodgrain to the people below poverty line at half the normal ration price. The stress was given on streamlining PDS so as to strengthen the system, preserve Government control on essential commodities and also to provide some relief to the people from the pressure of rising inflation. But Madam, I am sorry to say that the new scheme as envisaged by the Government has been a total failure and its implementation in the States has been disastrous. In fact this new Targeted Public Distribution System has brought adverse impact in the state PDS creating a complex and deteriorating situation. According to CMP of the United Front Government the initial plan was to provide 20 kg rice to the people below poverty line. But apprehending shortage in the Central Pool, the quantity of 20 kg was reduced to 10

kg. Actually instead of estimating the people below poverty line, the calculation was based on total population. The main task of PDS is to supply essential items to the needy at subsidized rates and to meet their requirement.

According to Indian Council of Medical Research the annual minimum requirement of rice per head for people below poverty line is 135 kg. But providing 10 kg means only 18% of requirement is covered. If the quantity is increased to 20 kg then at least 50% will be covered and the rest can be drawn from some other source. The scheme of streamlining PDS was to provide foodgrains to the people below poverty line at half rate and at the same time not to raise the prevailing ration price for general public.

Here the Government has totally failed the picture becomes clear if a comparison is made between the price prevailing prior to Targeted Public Distribution System and the current ration price. A family consisting of five members whose requirement is 30 kg was paying Rs. 120.60 Paise at the rate of Rs. 4.02 paise. But with a sudden increase of Rs. 5/- from 4.02 paise, the same family now spends Rs. 125/-. So this partial implementation of providing 10 kg rice at half price has actually resulted in paying Rs. 4.40 paise more for each family. Thus instead of giving relief to the already hard pressed people, this new scheme has in reality increased their expenditure for drawing ration.

Then, under the new scheme, each State has been allocated the average quantity of foodgrains it has actually lifted for the Public Distribution System over the past decade. But the lifting has quite often failed because of bottleneck. As a result, under the new scheme the State Government's allocation of foodgrains for the PDS has declined. In West Bengal the quantity of 18 lakh tonnes of rice has come down to fourteen lakh fifty thousand tonnes. In Orissa as mentioned by Shri Panigrahi from one lakh tonne of rice it has been reduced to 3500 tonnes. Orissa was getting 50 thousand tonnes of wheat before. Now it has become nil. We are all aware of famine-stricken people of Kalahandi. Instead of giving relief to the needy, this new scheme has failed to provide anything to the poor. Even the needy, the intended beneficiaries, are forced to buy a large part of their foodgrain requirement from the open market.

The situation in North Eastern region, Andamans and Lakshadweep is all the more grim. The people here depend solely on PDS for their requirement. But the quantity has been declined. So they are not able to draw the required quantity from PDS. So, there is a total failure of PDS in this region. It is a matter of regret that because of the collapse of the system, a large number of people below poverty line has been forced to purchase from open market.

For implementation of their programme, UF Government has accepted the recommendation of Lakhdawala Committee. This recommendation has got the approval of Planning Commission also. As per this report, the number of people below poverty line is 32 crore. We

\*Translation of the speech Originally delivered in Bengali.

had objection to this report. Assam was the basis for North Eastern region. The Central Government has given a guideline to determine the number of people below poverty line. In our region, i.e., Tripura, the percentage was 73.4. But according to Lakhdawala report it is 38.8%. Some of the States have made their own yardstick to determine the percentage of people below poverty line. In fact this yardstick is decided by their respective need. In UP, the people with annual income of Rs. 8000/- or below are categorised as people below poverty line. In Maharashtra, the BJP-Shiv Sena Government have gone one step ahead. They have categorised people below poverty line with an annual income of Rs. 4000 and below. Actually by displaying more number of people below poverty line, some want to misuse PDS.

I would like to mention another important point. The previous Congress Government of Shri Narasimha Rao decided to abolish PDS because of World Bank pressure. Keeping in mind the vote bank, they wanted to continue PDS in hilly adivasi and tribal regions. But the UF Government has abolished this minimum programme also. What is the outcome now? One-third inhabitants of Orissa are adivasis. In North-Eastern region, Tripura, more than half the population are adivasis and tribal people. We know, Madam the intense poverty these people have to face. We were providing subsidized double ration to these people to save them from starvation. But now due to the new scheme that arrangement has been affected. Moreover in our North-Eastern region, we have some other problems like militancy, the natural calamity like flood, landslide and so on. Keeping in view these problems, FCI were asked to store foodgrains in the State but it was not done.

There is broad gauge line from Guwahati to Lumding. Then there is a metre-gauge line which discontinues after some area. So, proper distribution of foodgrain becomes difficult. Then, the basis of average of 10 years of lifting is also not proper. Tripura Government, even after paying advance payment, could not get their allocation. They have allowed the FCI free of cost of store grain. But FCI is not taking any initiative to store foodgrains. Kerosene, salt and sugar are some other important items in PDS.

Madam, you are aware of many villages in Tripura devoid of electricity. People depend on kerosene. The discretion lies with the Centre to determine the quota to provide kerosene per head and per card. There are some more important factors also. Due to lack of railway connection, diesel is needed for transport. But without any infrastructure facility, the whole process of distribution has failed. Keeping in view these factors, I would like to give some suggestions so as the intended section of Targeted Public Distribution System, i.e., the really needy people are benefitted.

The recommendations of Lakhdawala Committee as accepted by Planning Commission must be followed and the people below poverty line must get grain at half rate.

There should not be any drastic deviation from the prevailing system. The requirement of the State even if it is more must be met by the Centre. The supply price of rice and wheat must not be raised.

The PDS must be streamlined and the Government must give assurance to provide 14 essential items through PDS.

19.00 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members, now, it is 7 O'clock. The time allotted for this discussion was two hours. We have already taken three hours, and still there are seven or eight speakers more to participate. So, if you all agree, we can extend the House by one hour and finish it today.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : No, Madam. Please adjourn the House now. This discussion may be continued tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : In that case, there is a possibility of the other names being scrapped.

..... (Interruptions)

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA (Kanpur) : Madam, the ruling from the Chair was that we will be sitting upto 7 O'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Absolutely, that was the situation. But day before yesterday, it was extended beyond 7 o'clock to cover all the speakers in the list of discussion on IRA Bill.

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Madam, if we have done something wrong day before yesterday, does it mean that we should repeat it today also?

MR. CHAIRMAN : You all agreed at that time.

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (Ratnagiri) : Let it be taken up tomorrow. It is 7 o'clock and we have to attend other programme.

[English]

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : It can continue tomorrow ..... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. If you do not agree, then there is no other alternative but to adjourn the House now.

So, the House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 8th August 1997 at 11 a.m.

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Thank you very much, Madam, for adjourning the House in time.

19.01 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, August 8, 1997/Shravana 17, 1919 (Saka)*