

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4247
ANSWERED ON:20.12.2011
WORKING GROUPS ON PRICE RISE
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Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government had constituted three working groups for suggesting measures to check rise in prices of food items in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the composition and date of constitution of the said groups;
- (c) whether the said groups have since submitted their reports to the Union Government; and
- (d) if so, the details and the implementation status thereof indicating the salient features of the recommendations made and the steps taken on these specific recommendations?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b) : Yes, Madam. The 'Core Group of Central Ministers and State Chief Ministers on Prices of Essential Commodities' in their meeting held on April 8th, 2010 and presided over by the Prime Minister, had decided to constitute three Working Groups viz.;

- (i) Working Group on Agriculture Production.
- (ii) Working Group on Consumer Affairs.
- (iii) Working Group on Food & Public Distribution.

Working Group were asked to submit their Reports in two months. However, extension of time for submission of report was given from time to time. Constitution and Terms of Reference of the three Working Groups read as under:

1. Working Group on Agriculture Production consists of;

Chief Minister, Haryana -Chair

Chief Minister, Punjab

Chief Minister, West Bengal

Chief Minister, Bihar

The Working Group on Agriculture Production deliberated on and recommen` measures for increasing agricultural production and productivity including long term policies for sustained agricultural growth.

2. Working Group on Consumer Affairs consists of;

Chief Minister, Gujarat - Chair

Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister, Maharashtra

Chief Minister, Tamilnadu

The Working Group on Consumer Affairs deliberated on and recommended measures for reducing the gap between farm gate and retail prices and better implementation of and amendment(s) to Essential Commodities Act.

3. Working Group on Food and Public Distribution consists of;

Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission - Chair

Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

Chief Minister, Assam

Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister

The Working Group on Food and Public Distribution deliberated on and recommended measures for better and effective delivery of essential commodities to the vulnerable sections of society and augmentation of warehouses & storage capacity including cold chain.

(c) & (d) : The Working Group on Agriculture Production submitted its report on 15th; December,2010. The Working Group Report on Agriculture Production has mainly recommended measures, inter-alia, for ensuring increased foodgrain production; special thrust on pulses and oilseeds to address nutrition security; improving input delivery mechanism ; linking farmers to market and institution of credit for higher income; accelerating land reform process in States lagging behind in production and productivity; and strategy for conserving agro-bio diversity and adaptation to climate change for a sustainable agricultural growth.

The Chairman of the Working Group on Consumer Affairs submitted the Report of the Working Group on 2nd March, 2011. The main recommendations of the Working Group on Consumer Affairs include, inter-alia, increasing competition in Agriculture Produce Markets; improving Agri-Infrastructure of backward and forward linkages for Agriculture Production and Marketing; integrate warehousing/cold chain infrastructure with spot and futures markets in the form of negotiable warehouse receipts; development of Human Resources in the field of Agriculture Marketing; promote retailing by organized sector/cooperatives; maintain adequate stock of essential commodities across the country; in the short term encourage substitution of pulses while implement policies to achieve self sufficiency in the production of pulses; to strengthen the statutory provisions to improve the availability of essential commodities at reasonable price.

The Working Group on Food and Public Distribution submitted its Report on 5th October, 2011. The Working Group Report on Food and Public Distribution has mainly recommended, among others, finalizing the number of BPL beneficiaries in consultation with the State Governments; Streamlining and strengthening Targeted Public Distribution System(TPDS) ; Web enable computerisation of TPDS; Information Technology Strategy for Public Distribution System; a Comprehensive Electronic Benefit Transfer System; and Enhancing Storage Capacity.

The three Reports have been submitted for a decision of the Government.