

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2256

ANSWERED ON:27.03.2012

SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

Alagiri Shri S. ;Haldar Shri Sucharu Ranjan;Kaswan Shri Ram Singh;Maadam Shri Vikrambhai Arjanbhai;Premajibhai Dr. Solanki Kiritbhai;Reddy Shri Magunta Srinivasulu;Siddeswara Shri Gowdar Mallikarjunappa;Singh Shri Bhola;Singh Shri Pashupati Nath;Sinh Dr. Sanjay

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the legislations enacted by the Government to check hoarding and ensure smooth supply of essential commodities at reasonable prices;
- (b) whether any assessment has been made of the implementation of the said legislations in different States; `
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of raids carried out and the number of persons against whom cases were registered under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 in various States including Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh during each of the Last three years, State-wise: and
- (e) the steps taken for smooth supply of essential commodities and to control their prices?

Answer

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

(a): In its endeavor to ensure availability of essential commodities to the consumers and to protect them from exploitation by unscrupulous traders, the Government has armed itself with the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

The Essential Commodities Act, 1955 was enacted for the control of production, supply and distribution of, and trade and commerce in certain commodities in the interest of the general public. It provides for regulation of production and manufacture, control of prices, regulation of transport, distribution, disposal, use or consumption and even prohibition of sale of any essential commodity. The powers under the said Act have been exercised by various Central Government Ministries, apart from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs) as also by the State Governments to whom some of the powers have been formally delegated. In the exercise of these powers, various Ministries/Departments of Government of India as well as the State Governments have issued control orders from time to time regulating production, distribution and other trading aspects in respect of commodities declared as essential.

The Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 which is being implemented by the State Governments/UT Administrations for the prevention of unethical trade practices like hoarding and blackmarketing etc., empowers Governments including the State Governments to detain persons whose activities are found to be prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies of commodities essential to the community.

(b)&(c): No specific assessment has been made by the Government regarding implementation of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

As an administrative instruments, both the said Acts have, by and large, served its purpose particularly during price inflations and shortages by ensuring the availability of the essential commodities at affordable prices especially to the vulnerable sections. The enforcement of both the Acts lies with the State Governments/Union Territories, and the State Governments/UT Administrations have been repeatedly requested to strictly enforce both the Acts and also monitor enforcement of these Acts.

(d): The details of the raids conducted, value of goods confiscated and persons booked for violation of rules under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, during the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 as reported by State Governments/UT Administrations are at Annexure I to III.

(e): Steps taken by the Government to maintain smooth supply and for contain price rise of essential commodities which include, among others, action under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 for violation of rules and other measures as enumerated at Annexure-IV.