

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6384

ANSWERED ON:15.05.2012

HUNGER AND STARVATION DEATHS

Gawali Patil Smt. Bhavana Pundlikrao ;Hussain Shri Syed Shah Nawaz;Nagorao Shri Dudhgaonkar Ganeshrao;Sukur Shri Jadhav Baliram;Wankhede Shri Subhash Bapurao

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

- (a) whether the Government has received reports indicating hunger and deaths due to starvation from some parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the remedial action taken in this regard along with the number of starvation deaths reported during each of the last three years, State-wise;
- (c) whether hoarding and less procurement have led to rise in prices that have further aggravated the food security situation in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to amend the relevant rules including the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to check hoarding and black-marketing and improve the supply of essential commodities in the country?

Answer

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

(a)&(b): No State Government/Union Territory (UT) Administration has reported any incident of death due to hunger/starvation during each of the last three years and the current year.

For addressing the problem of starvation in the country and to ensure that people living below poverty line get adequate food grains, the Government has been providing food grains at highly subsidized prices to the targeted population through the State Governments /UT Administrations under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) such as Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Wheat Based Nutrition Programme under ICDS, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) - (Sabla), Annapurna, and Emergency Feeding Programme.

During 2012-13, a total of 543.01 lakh tons of rice & wheat have been allocated to States/UTs under different schemes which include a quantity of 514.92 lakh tons of foodgrains allocated under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and 28.09 lakh tons for Other Welfare Schemes.

(c) to (e): Procurement of food grains - rice and wheat - during the last three to four years have been substantially high at between 51.4 to 62.5 million tons. In view of the surplus stocks of food grain in the Central Pool as a result of the above, the food security situation in the country is comfortable.

For checking price rise due to hoarding and black marketing of essential commodities, various steps have been taken by the Government which include enabling State Governments to impose stockholding limits in respect of pulses, edible oils, edible oilseeds, rice and paddy, empowering State Governments/UT Administrations to detain such persons whose activities are found to be prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies of commodities essential to the community, under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 (PBM Act). Conferences including video conferences have been held from time to time with States/UTs reiterating the need for enforcement of the provisions of the PBM Act and the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (EC Act) to curb malpractices and provide adequate supplies of essential commodities at affordable prices, and State interventions to facilitate alternate arrangements for augmenting supplies of essential commodities. There is no proposal to amend the EC Act now.