

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1824

ANSWERED ON:04.12.2012

AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

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

- (a) whether the Government has put in place any mechanism to ensure adequate availability of essential commodities to the consumers at fair prices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for inadequate supply and rising prices of essential commodities; and
- (c) the corrective steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) To ensure availability of essential commodities to the consumers and to bring food articles within their reach at affordable prices, Government is making substantial allocation of foodgrains under TPDS to 6.52 crore BPL (including AAY) families and APL families in the States/UTs @ 35 kg per family per month at a highly subsidized central issue price (CIP). During the current year so far Government has made a total allocation of about 624 lakh tonnes of foodgrains from the central pool for ensuring sufficient availability of foodgrains to the general public at highly subsidized prices.

To protect the consumers from exploitation by unscrupulous traders, the Government/ has enacted the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and The Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. State Governments have a major role in checking prices of essential commodities by curbing malpractices, profiteering and hoarding through a set of administrative and regulatory measures. All the State Governments have been advised from time to time to make appropriate use of both these Acts.

Steps taken by the Government against persons who are violating provisions of Essential Commodities Act and to maintain supplies of essential commodities are enclosed at Annexure-I

Rise in the prices of essential commodities are due to several factors such as shortfall in domestic supplies relative to demand, rise in cost of inputs, hardening of international prices, changes in consumption pattern, adverse weather conditions, improvement in income and living standards, insufficient logistics and shortage of storage facilities.

(c) The steps taken by the Government to control the prices of essential commodities are enclosed at Annexure-II.