

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:155
ANSWERED ON:22.02.2013
COMMITTEE ON MINOR FOREST PRODUCE MFP
Tandon Annu

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has constituted a Committee to suggest appropriate measures for implementation of provisions regarding Ownership, Price Fixation, Value Addition and Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP);
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the recommendations made by the Committee; and
- (d) the follow-up action taken by the Government thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA DEO)

(a), (b) and (c): Yes, Madam. A Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. T. Haque was constituted by the Government in 2010 to suggest appropriate measures on Ownership, Price Fixation, Value Addition and Marketing of Minor Forest Produce. The Committee submitted its Report in May 2011.

The major recommendations made by the Committee are:

Amendment in State Laws and Indian Forest Act, 1927 should be done to clearly reflect the ownership of minor forest produce by the Gram Sabha.

Strategic government intervention would be necessary in the short and medium term in the form of minimum support price (MSP) for at least 14 main MFPs, namely tamarind, mahuwa flower, mahuwa seed, tendu leaf, bamboo, sal seed, myrobalan, chironji, lac, gum karaya, honey and seeds of karaja, neem and puwad.

The minimum support price should be fixed at the national level by a specially constituted Central Price Fixation Commission, comprising one chairperson who will be an expert in the field of tribal and rural development and three other members having experience in the relevant field.

TRIFED can work as a technical support unit of the Central Price Fixation Commission and assist the Commission by providing relevant information.

It will be obligatory for the State Government to ensure payment of MSP through its agencies. All administrative and operational costs of agencies defending the MSP shall be borne by the Government, as envisaged under first proviso to Article 275(1) of the Constitution or any other provision.

All agencies that undertake MSP operations have to be accountable to the Gram Sabha. In order to ensure transparency and accountability, the activities of the agencies as well as local accounts have to be placed in the Gram Sabha for social audit.

The Commission would develop appropriate methods for calculation of MSP for selected MFPs. Under no circumstances, the gatherers of MFP should be paid less than the existing minimum wages under the MGNREGA or minimum wages in agriculture sector, whichever is higher.

The MSP operation in the tribal areas should be seen as an anti-poverty measure. Losses incurred in the process of procurement of MFPs at minimum support prices and their disposal shall be borne by the Government, as envisaged under first proviso to Article 275(1) of the Constitution or any other provision.

Market information system will be needed for proper planning of the procurement, value addition and marketing of MFP by the stake-holders. Therefore, it is necessary to develop advanced information and communication technology based schemes.

In order to improve the bargaining power of the MFP gatherers, to enable them to get market-based better prices in the long run and also to ensure sustainable management of MFPs, it would be necessary to organize the gatherers in self-help groups or co-operatives or producer companies. The government should support such collectives through relevant government and non-government agencies.

Promotion of MFP based value addition activities in a participatory manner should be accorded priority.

To ensure sustainable regeneration, marketing and value addition, detailed information about the MFPs is needed and a systematic data base on these MFPs should be generated.

Regeneration of MFP be made an integral part of the Forest Working Plans to ensure maximum participation from the community in all regeneration activities.

(d): The Government has examined the recommendations of the Committee and has decided to work on a separate Scheme for minimum support price.