

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:313

ANSWERED ON:19.03.2013

PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

Khaira Shri Chandrakant Bhaurao;Yadav Shri M. Anjan Kumar

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

- (a) whether the rate of conviction under the existing applicable laws/orders pertaining to supply of essential commodities and price control have been relatively less;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor indicating the number of raids/searches conducted, number of irregularities detected, persons booked and awarded punishment during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise;
- (c) whether laxity in implementation of the extant rules coupled with lower procurement and ineffective Public Distribution System (PDS) have contributed to the rising prices of essential commodities; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (d) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 313 FOR 19.3.2013 REGARDING PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES.

(a) & (b) :The State Governments/ Union Territories Administrations have been delegated powers for effective enforcement and to take necessary action under the provisions of both "The Essential Commodities Act, 1955" and "The Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980", to prevent hoarding and blackmarketing of essential commodities. The details of the action taken under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 as reported by the State Governments / Union Territories for the years 2010, 2011, 2012 and upto 15.3.2013 are at Annexure I, II and III respectively. As reported by some of the States/Union Territories, the main reasons for low prosecution/conviction vis-À - vis number of arrests are as under:

(i) Cases under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 are time consuming and laborious in view of the procedural requirement under the Act.

(ii) Heavy pendency of cases, due to which disposal is slow.

The State Governments/ Union Territories Administrations are also empowered to detain such persons under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, whose activities are found to be prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies of commodities essential to the community. Details of detention orders made by the State Governments year-wise and state-wise during 2010, 2011 and 2012 (upto 15.03.2013) under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, are given as under:

Name of the State 2010 2011 2012 and upto 15.03.2013

Gujarat 79 67 41

Tamil Nadu 120 198 187

Orissa 02 # #

Maharashtra 02 05 03

Andhra Pradesh 01 # #

Chhattisgarh 01 # #

Total 205 270 231

(c) & (d) : There have been no reports of laxity in the implementation of Essential Commodities Act, 1955. Rise in prices of essential commodities is due to various factors such as shortfall in domestic supplies relative to demand, hardening of international prices, changes in consumption pattern, adverse weather conditions etc.

In order to maintain supplies, securing availability and distribution of essential commodities, Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 has mandated the State and Union Territories Governments to carry out all required action to ensure smooth functioning of Targeted Public Distribution System and also to take action against those indulging in malpractices in Targeted Public Distribution System. Action taken by States/ Union Territories under Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 during the last three years, State-wise, is at Annexure IV.