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Title: Need to restore the universal rationing through Public Distribution System (PDS).

DR. K.S. MANOJ (ALLEPPEY): Sir, kindly permit me to speak from here.

Sir, Kerala, being a food deficient State, is heavily dependent on the Public Distribution System for ensuring food security of the State. More than 85 per cent of the foodgrain requirement of the State is dependent on Public Distribution System foodgrains from outside the State. The decision of the Government of India to implement targeted Public Distribution System has adversely affected the State. The percentage of BPL population fixed was arbitrary. This has led to the exclusion of several eligible families from the BPL list. Also, the crisis in agricultural sector and recurring natural calamities are adding to the number of BPL families. Instead of widening the network of PDS, the Government of India has curtailed the already existing quota of wheat, sugar and kerosene to the State. As per the revision, the allocation of wheat for PDS in Kerala has been reduced from 46190 MTs to 19130 MTs—that is, it is almost reduced to one-third—from June 2006 to March 2007. During the last five years, there has been a substantial reduction of 7750 MTs in the allotment of kerosene to the State. In this way, the Government of India is neglecting the genuine demand of the State.

The hon. Chief Minister of Kerala has personally met the hon. Minister for Food and Public Distribution and apprised the situation of the State. The other day, the ration retail dealers from Kerala and other States organised a rally and dharna at Jantar Mantar demanding strengthening of PDS.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to take immediate steps to restore the universal rationing through Public Distribution System.