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Title: Further discussion on Price rise raised by Shri P. Karunakaran on the 17th December, 2015.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up Item No. 42.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): Since there is a discussion pending under Rule 193 which had been going on for the last two weeks and Shri P. Karunakaran had initiated the discussion on the matter of price rise. So, we would like this discussion to be concluded because tomorrow is the last day. After that at 4 o'clock we can take up the legislative business if the Chair finds it appropriate. But we can now start the discussion on Rule 193 so that the discussion can be concluded, otherwise there would not be any reply to the discussion. Tomorrow is the last day of the Session and so it would be very difficult and so we would like to take up the discussion on 193 now.

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If the House agrees to what the hon. Minister is suggesting, then we can take up the discussion under Rule 193.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Sir, yes.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Sir, what about the other Bills?

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That is why it has been suggested by the hon. Minister that we can take up the discussion under Rule 193 and then at 4 o'clock we will see that.

SHRI P.R. SENTHILNATHAN (SIVAGANGA): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the discussion on price rise. I express my sincere thanks and gratitude to our beloved leader hon. Amma also for giving me this opportunity to speak on this discussion.

The very sharp rise in price of food and essential commodities is a phenomenon that characterized the last few years of the erstwhile UPA Government. This was caused due to the poor macro economic management of the Government of India. Some of those inflationary trends have persisted in the tenure of the present Government as well. The overall inflation has been kept under check. Food inflation has not been effectively tackled. Some decisive action by the Government of India is essential to ensure that the common person is protected against the rapid rise in price, particularly food and essential commodities.

In the State of Tamil Nadu, the State Government under the capable leadership of hon. Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has taken a large number of appropriate measures to ensure that the common people and the poor and the vulnerable are protected against the rise in price of the essential commodities. One of the first decisions of hon. Amma after assumption of Office as Chief Minister in May 2011 was to announce and implement free supply of 20 kilograms of rice per month through the Public Distribution System to about 1.83 crore families in the State.

Tamil Nadu's PDS is the best functioning Public Distribution System in the country as recognised by many economists and scholars both in India and abroad. The supply of free rice in the PDS has greatly helped the vast majority of families in the State and protected them against the rise in food prices.

The well functioning Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu has also been effectively leveraged by the State Government to reach other essential commodities to the people of the State at reasonable prices. One litre of refined palm oil is supplied at Rs. 25 and one kilogram each of urad and tur dal are supplied at Rs. 30 per kilogram to all family card holders as part of the Special Public Distribution System. The State Government incurs an expenditure of Rs. 1861 crore on the Special PDS out of its own budgetary resources every year.

The steep rise of prices of vegetables and pulses is a very serious concern in Indian homes in recent months. It has made the life of common people, poor and middle class people in particular miserable. The price of pulses and other essential commodities including the petroleum products have reached an unreachable maximum. The sky-rocketing prices of vegetables and pulses have made any average middle class family think twice before buying or consuming them. The big question is why is there a constant food inflation.

Frequent fuel price rises affect the prices of all other essential commodities dearly. Hon. Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has opposed the frequent revision in fuel prices, that too when the international price of crude oil is down to an all-time low in the last ten years. The hon. Prime Minister should intervene and make necessary efforts to have a price control and regulation policy to put brakes to such consistent hikes. The Centre getting revenue by revising excise duty but passing the burden on the common man was 'an unjust act'.

The people of Tamil Nadu, rich or poor, thrive mainly on idli, vada, dosa and sambar as their staple food and quite naturally depend on pulses and grains. The people of Tamil Nadu who consume larger quantities of various types of pulses are the most affected due to the sky-rocketing prices of vegetables and pulses in the recent times.

In an attempt to stabilise the soaring prices of pulses and augment their availability, the Government of Tamil Nadu, under the dynamic leadership of the hon. Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, have ordered to sell 500 metric tonnes of tur dal in its cooperative outlets at subsidized rates. Half a kilogram of tur dal is priced at Rs. 55 and one kilogram of it is priced at Rs. 110. Imported dal is being sold through 36 outlets run by TUCS, North Chennai, Chintamani Cooperative Societies and 20 Amudham departmental Stores and available in 11 cooperative outlets in Madurai, 14 in Tiruchirappalli and 10 in Coimbatore. The PDS outlets would continue to sell the subsidized tur dal, urad dal and palm oil at Rs. 30 and Rs. 25 respectively. These timely initiatives would help stabilise the market rate of tur dal. It is because of the efforts taken by the hon. Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma that the ill effects of price rise on the poor and middle class people have been reduced considerably.

With the change in eating habits, many families consume pulses in excess of what is supplied in the Special PDS each month. They purchase them in the open market in order to moderate the increase in prices of dal in the open market. The Government of Tamil Nadu has also launched a Market Stabilisation Fund with a provision of Rs. 100 crore for effective market intervention through the cooperative wholesale stores network to moderate the prices of dal in the State. A total of 230 tonnes of urad dal and 120 tonnes of tur dal were supplied through this mechanism which helped to substantially bring down market prices, effectively curbing the hoarding tendency through market means.

Recently, when the Government of India imported 5,000 metric tonnes of unmilled *thuvai dal* and offered it through the States, Tamil Nadu was the first State to lift 1,000 metric tonnes. The Tamil Nadu Universal Public Distribution System, commended both within India and elsewhere, is a model food security programme. This vital programme requires constant vigil and monitoring so as to ensure that the benefits continue to reach the deserving persons and to plug leakages. Hon. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Amma has ordered officials to ensure that the process of collection of biometric information through the National Population Register is expedited and the State is in a position to issue smart cards to all families in the State at the earliest.

The Government of Tamil Nadu under the leadership of hon. Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has also launched several initiatives to make available fresh vegetables to consumers in urban areas, while at the same time ensuring that vegetable farmers get remunerative prices. As part of many measures taken by this Government to combat price rise, 48 Farm Fresh Vegetable Outlets have been opened in Chennai. Consumers are now able to buy vegetables at reasonable prices and at the same time farmers get both an assured market and remunerative prices. (Interruptions)

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: May I request the Members to take their seats? Hon. Members, please go to your seats.

SHRI P.R. SENTHILNATHAN : Already 2,482 metric tonnes of vegetables valued at Rs. 7.38 crore have been sold through these outlets. To ensure sustainable vegetable supply, 10,493 farmers have been provided with crop loans of Rs. 55.22 crore for the cultivation of vegetables have been provided. Amma had instructed the District Collectors to open Farm Fresh Outlets at appropriate locations in their districts for the benefit of the public.

Why are the prices of pulses, vegetables and other essential commodities increasing continuously in India? It is not only due to a poor harvest or due to a bad monsoon. There are ten important man-made reasons which result in the rising prices of pulses, vegetables and other essential commodities.

There are global inflation, less space for cultivation, less production of pulses, increased cost of production, improper management and distribution, fuel price rise and increased cost of transportation, hoarding, many mediators, supply chain mismanagement, and increased demand for protein-enriched food and green vegetables.

It is unfortunate to see India's villages face a sharp spike in food prices in 2016, as a second year of drought drives up the cost of ingredients such as sugar and milk, and poor transport infrastructure stops falling global prices from reaching rural areas. While urban dwellers have seen some cheaper imported food products, benefiting from global deflation, that has not filtered through to rural areas, given poor roads, rail and a lack of storage facilities for perishable goods.

Prices of vegetables like onions, tomatoes and potatoes have already been rising. Palm oil prices have also climbed in the last two months, while milk prices have risen by ten per cent. Edible oil prices in India, which meets nearly 70 per cent of demand through imports, are also likely to rise, given the scant rainfall in palm oil producing countries.

Meanwhile, scarcity of fodder and water is expected to hit local milk production. The lesser production will obviously allow prices to rise. The rural economy contributes around 50 per cent of Indian Gross Domestic product and is already showing signs of strain as the Government has cut down the once generous subsidies that shielded farmers and villagers. Agriculture income has dropped nearly by 50 per cent due to drought. They borrowed loan from banks for seeds and fertilizer, but now they do not know how to repay the loan.

Continuing the past trend of significant increases in the Minimum Support Price of pulses, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs raised those of *masoor* and gram, the two most sown in the rabi season, by Rs. 250 a quintal. A bonus of Rs. 75 a quintal has also been recommended over and above the MSP, a total increase of Rs. 325 a quintal as compared to 2014-15.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs also authorized the Food Corporation of India, along with other procuring agencies, to undertake procurement of pulses and oilseeds. The MSP of wheat, the biggest *rabi* food grain, has been raised by Rs.75 a quintal, the highest increase in recent years. If the money we spend on importing pulses reaches our farmers, there will not be any suicides or shortage of food grains. There has been an overall increase in the prices of almost every commodity.

It is high time the hon. Prime Minister concentrated and focussed more on domestic policies because a lot of things require the intervention of the Prime Minister. Just as onions left many crying, it is now the turn of pulses (*dal*). The price of the poor man's staple has doubled and there is no visible measure to check its spiralling growth. While India has reached self-sufficiency in many food items, which include milk, rice and wheat, it has not been able to do the same with pulses. While all these revolutions had their own God Father like Varghese Kurien or Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, pulses, one of the most used ingredients in the Indian kitchen, had not found support from any quarter. Approximately, an annual import bill of \$ 2.6 billion is incurred by India only on pulses. If this amount were to reach our farmers, they may never think of leaving farming – leave alone committing suicide. Lack of policies or clarity on agriculture planning has led to this crisis which is not going to abate in the near future.

As a rule, the demand for all commodities reaches a peak during the festival season in India. Pulses are no exception. India is facing a crisis because of deficient rainfall in one end and excess rainfall in the other side. But we cannot blame this alone for this crisis. Crisis is mainly in *tur* and *urad dals*, two of the most consumed pulses, as total pulses' production dipped to 17.2 million tonnes last year against 19.25 million tonnes in the previous year. Domestic production may be just 17 million tonnes against the demand of 27 million tonnes. Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are the major pulse-producing regions followed by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Canada, Ukraine, the USA, Australia, Myanmar and a few African countries contribute to India's pulses need.

Pulses production in India has shown less than 40 per cent growth during the last five decades and this has led to almost halving the *per capita* availability to 30 grams now. So, this precisely means the prices are doubling at an alarmingly low periodicity.

We also have to take stock of the Green Revolution and what it has achieved. Though we are self-sufficient in rice and wheat, crop rotation has made the soil of some of the Northern States unfit for use. The result is there for all to see. But crop rotation and diversification could have helped retain the soil. But we never put other essential commodities in this agriculture cycle and the net result is that the farmers of Canada, Myanmar and Australia are benefiting instead of our own.

Approximately, India's annual import bill of pulses alone is \$ 2.6 billion. Imagine this reaching our own farmers, they may never think of leaving farming – leave alone think of committing suicide! Just see the granaries of public distribution system like Food Corporation of India warehouses. Wheat and rice are rotting because we are over-producing both. Why cannot we replace one of these with pulses? The question is: who will the farmers go to if something goes wrong with these decisions?

It is not that we cannot incentivize the production of pulses. There are many ways to do it and India's climate is suited to grow most of the lentils we consume. The Minimum Support Price is also not transparent and it depends on various political factors. Some of the lentils do come under MSP but they are not attractive enough for farmers to concentrate merely on pulses. Not all pulses come under the ambit of MSP. But more than MSP, it is procurement guarantee that matters.

To feed our growing population, we need at least 30 million tonnes of lentils by 2030 which is close to five per cent growth annually. We are no way near it. So we will continue to burn our foreign exchange reserves forever. By merely checking the prices of pulses, inflation is not going to be under control. There has been an overall increase in the prices of almost every commodity. People are now destined to live with it. It looks like the Government should go by correct advice and take correct economic action on the ground.

Inflation in India generally occurs as a consequence of global traded commodities and the several efforts made by the Reserve Bank of India to weaken rupee against dollar. This has been regarded as the root cause of inflation crisis rather than the domestic inflation. According to some experts, the policy of the RBI to absorb all dollars coming into the Indian Economy contributes to the appreciation of the rupee. When the US dollar has shrunk by a margin of 30 per cent. Reserve Bank of India had made a massive injection of dollar in the economy make it highly liquid, and this further triggered off inflation in non-traded goods.

The Amma Canteen scheme, a brain child of the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu *Puratchi Thalaivi Amma*, which is now renowned across the world, and studied by governments and experts from different parts of India and the world, has also had a salutary impact on keeping a check on food prices in Tamil Nadu. In *Amma* Canteens *idlis* with *sambar* is supplied at Rs 1 and curd rice at Rs 3 and *sambar* rice at Rs 5.

There are a number of other commodities which are also supplied at reasonable prices in Tamil Nadu. I would specifically like to highlight the *Amma* Mineral Water, *Amma* Salt, and *Amma* Cement programmes which ensure availability at reasonable prices of commodities prone to price increase due to cartelization and other factors. These interventions have had a salutary effect on market prices of such commodities. VAT on domestic LPG has also been completely exempted to ensure that price of domestic LPG is kept reasonable in spite of deregulation of LPG prices.

Through many such innovative and imaginative schemes, the Government of Tamil Nadu under the leadership of *Amma* has managed to ensure that the common people in the State have been protected against the ill-effects of price rise. This is no mean achievement.

Our leader, *Amma* has rightly cautioned against the implementation of the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme in areas where the availability and price level of

commodities is a key concern. These are primarily the food, fertilizer, LPG and kerosene subsidy schemes, where the availability of the essential commodities and affordable prices is the key concern, and merely transferring the monetary equivalent of the subsidy being incurred, and that too on a pre-determined and fixed basis, will not adequately protect the food and nutritional security of the common people. Such a scheme would expose the common people who depend on the Public Distribution System and fertilizer supply to the vagaries of the market and deprive them of

essential commodities. Hence, the Government of India should exercise the greatest care and caution in expanding the scope of the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme beyond those schemes which currently involve cash transfer at present, like scholarships and pensions. This is the unequivocal stance of the AIADMK Party.

What can the Government of India do to bring down prices and protect the poor? I would like to suggest to subsidize food items including pulses and edible oil; roll back the additional excise duty levied on petrol and diesel announced earlier this year; enable cheaper movement by rail by reducing the freight rates for essential commodities; reduce the toll fee collected, particularly from freight vehicles; and provide adequate input subsidy to farmers to encourage production of pulses and oil seeds with assured price and purchase mechanism.

All these factors to be taken into account to control price rise in India. I urge upon the Union Government to take appropriate steps to control the soaring price rise graph and maintain the prices as lower as possible for the poor and middle class people of this country on the lines of hon. *Puratchi Thalaivi Amma*. With these words, I conclude.

15.00 hours

श्री जगदम्बिका पाल (दुमरियानंज): उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपका अत्यंत आभारी हूँ कि आपने एक महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर जो रही चर्चा में मुझे भाग लेने का अवसर दिया। इस बात का यह सदन गवाह है, हमारे प्रो. सौगत राय जी भी बैठे हैं, पिछली लोक सभा के और भी सदस्य यहां बैठे हैं, कि 15वीं लोक सभा में लगातार कोई ऐसा सत् नहीं होता था जब महंगाई पर हम चर्चा न करते हों। जिस तरीके से पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों के दामों में उस समय लगातार वृद्धि हो रही थी और महंगाई को लेकर आम जनता का जन-जीवन आवश्यक वस्तुओं के लिए किस तरह से दूभर हो गया था, मैं समझता हूँ कि आप भी इस बात के साक्षी हैं कि आज 16वीं लोक सभा में जिन लोगों ने महंगाई पर चर्चा के लिए प्रस्ताव दिया, पूरा देश इस बात को देख रहा होगा। अगर महंगाई एक महत्वपूर्ण विषय है, तो सुबह आकर सदन में प्रश्न काल में जब माननीय सदस्य का अधिकार होता है सरकार और मंत्रियों से सवाल पूछने का और सरकार की तथा मंत्रियों की जवाबदेही होती है कि वह जनता की आकांक्षाओं और अपेक्षाओं के सापेक्ष में उनके सवालों का जवाब दे। लेकिन जिस तरीके से इन लोगों द्वारा प्रश्न काल और फिर शून्य काल बाधित किया जाता है और फिर वाकआउट कर जाते हैं, तो ये बताएं कि इनकी क्या स्ट्रेटेजी है, मैं इतना ही कहना चाहूँगा कि इनके द्वारा क्यों प्रश्न काल को डिस्टर्ब करके सदन के बाकी माननीय सदस्यों के हक और हकूकों पर कुठाराघात किया जा रहा है। जब पूरे सदन में जनता की समस्याओं पर चर्चा हो रही हो और ये उस समय सेंट्रल हॉल में या अपने घरों में आराम से बैठें, शायद यही कारण है कि जनता ने इन्हें इतनी कम संख्या में चुनकर यहां भेजा है। इसलिए निश्चित तौर से सदन और देश इस बात को देखेगा कि ये यहां क्या करने आते हैं।

उपाध्यक्ष जी, मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर विपक्ष के ये लोग यहां होते तो मैं पूछता कि महंगाई का क्या कारण आप मानते हैं। ये लोग अभी महंगाई की बात कर रहे हैं, लेकिन जब देश में हमारी सरकार यानि एनडीए की सरकार आई तो सरकार बनने के बाद 7 मई, 2015 को हमारे खाद्य मंत्री जी ने सभी प्रदेशों और यूनियन टैरिटरी के रसद मंत्रियों की बैठक बुलाकर इस पर चर्चा की थी। यह सही है कि कृषि राज्यों का विषय है। जिस समय 26 मई, 2014 को हमारी सरकार बनी थी, आपको याद होगा कि सरकार बनने के बाद सबसे पहला काम यह किया गया कि इस देश में जितने भी कालाबाजारी करने वाले और होर्डिंग करने वाले हैं, उनके खिलाफ कठोर कार्रवाई किए जाने की घोषणा सरकार द्वारा की गई थी। हालांकि यह अधिकार राज्यों में निहित है। अगर महंगाई है तो निश्चित तौर पर उसे रोकने के लिए राज्यों द्वारा आवश्यक कदम उठाए जाने चाहिए। जैसा अभी हमारे तमिलनाडू के माननीय सदस्य बता रहे थे कि कैसे उनके राज्य में मुख्य मंत्री अम्मा ने सस्ते दामों पर साम्भर, इडली और डोसा आम जनता को बेचने जैसे कदम उठाए हैं, वह हर राज्य सरकार का दायित्व होना चाहिए और उस तरह से तमिलनाडू की सरकार अपने दायित्व का सफलतापूर्वक निर्वहन कर रही है।

अरेंशियल कमोडिटी एक्ट जो 1955 है, अगर कहीं कोई होर्डिंग होती है या कालाबाजारी होती है, तो निश्चित तौर पर इस एक्ट के तहत कार्रवाई होनी चाहिए। मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि आज निश्चित तौर पर कहीं कोई महंगाई नहीं है। चाहे खाद्यान्न हों या वेजिटेबल्स हों। पिछले दिनों दाल की कमी हुई। वह इसलिए हुई क्योंकि देश में मार्च-अप्रैल में बरसात हुई और पिछले दो बरस से प्राकृतिक आपदाओं का प्रकोप हुआ इसलिए जो देश की आवश्यकता है 22-23 मिलियन टन की, उसकी जगह केवल 17 मिलियन टन ही दाल पैदा हुई। इस तरह देखा जाए तो पांच से छः मिलियन टन दाल की कमी हो गई और उससे दाल की कीमतों में वृद्धि हुई। लेकिन जैसे ही दाल की कीमत में वृद्धि होने लगी, नरु सरकार निश्चित तौर पर बधाई की पातू है कि उसने सभी राज्यों से कह दिया कि अगर दाल की कमी है तो 30-09-2016 तक के लिए के आप दाल का आयात कर सकते हैं और केन्द्र सरकार ने आयात शुल्क जीरो कर दिया। स्वाभाविक है कि केन्द्र सरकार आप जनता के हित के लिए चिंता थी कि लोगों को उनकी आवश्यकतानुसार दाल उपलब्ध हो। उस उपलब्धता के लिए अगर राज्य को आवश्यकता है तो 5,000 मिलियन टन तुअर की दाल को राज्यों के एलोकेशन के हिसाब से, डिमांड के हिसाब से आयात करने की बात कही। क्योंकि यह राज्यों का रिक्वायरमेंट होता है, उन्हें खरीदना होता है और यहां तक कि जो दाल एक्सपोर्ट होती थी, उस पर भी केन्द्र सरकार ने बैं किया कि हम निर्यात पर प्रतिबंध लगाते हैं, जिससे कि देश में दाल की कमी न होने पाये। इसके लिए भारत सरकार ने एक प्लान स्कीम भी बनाई। पहली बार मार्केट को स्टेबिलाइज करने के लिए प्राइस स्टेबिलाइजेशन फंड भी बनाया और पांच सौ करोड़ रुपये का एक कार्पस फंड भी बनाया गया और यह भी कहा गया कि इस कार्पस फंड से हम बफर स्टॉक बनायेंगे। जिस समय किसानों की पैदावार होती है, उस समय इसे प्रोव्हायर करके एक बफर स्टॉक बनाकर जहां जितनी आवश्यकता होगी, वह पूरी करेंगे।

महोदय, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली पूरे तरीके से राज्य का सब्जित है, अगर राज्य सरकारें निश्चित तौर से इस बात को सुनिश्चित नहीं करेंगी कि जो केन्द्र सरकार से आप अपनी आवश्यकता के अनुसार गेहूँ, चावल या जो भी खाद्यान्न हों या आवश्यक वस्तुओं की मांग करते हैं, उसकी आपूर्ति करने का काम फूड कॉर्पोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया का है या वह काम भारत सरकार की एजेन्सीज करती हैं। माननीय मंत्री जी विस्तार से बतायेंगे कि राज्यों की क्या आवश्यकता थी या उसके सापेक्ष या उसके मुताबिक हमने व्हीट, पैडी और ग्रेन्स को राज्यों के मुताबिक दिया। आज भी खाद्यान्न की कोई कमी नहीं है, हम दुनिया के सामने कहना चाहते हैं कि इस देश की जनता की जितनी भी खाद्यान्न की आवश्यकता हो, चाहे गेहूँ, चावल या अन्य वस्तु की हो, ऐसी किसी भी आवश्यकता को पूरा करने के लिए हमारे पास सरप्लस स्टॉक है और केन्द्र सरकार इस बात को सुनिश्चित करती है। लेकिन इसके बावजूद अगर किसी चीज का दाम बढ़ता है तो निश्चित तौर पर उसमें राज्य सरकार को उपाय करना होगा और आज राज्य सरकार को यह अधिकार हमने दिया, चाहे अरेंशियल कमोडिटीज एक्ट, 1955 हो या दि प्रिवेंशन ब्लैक मार्केटिंग एंड रेगुलेशन ऑफ अरेंशियल कमोडिटीज एक्ट, 1980 हो, ये जो दोनों कानून हैं, ये अधिकार राज्यों के पास हैं और राज्यों और यूनियन टैरिटरीज को यह भी कहा गया कि पल्सेज के स्टॉक की एक लिमिट हो, ताकि लोग इसकी होर्डिंग, जमाखोरी न करें, उस स्टॉक लिमिट के लिए भी एडवायजरी किया और यहां तक एडवायजरी किया कि आप अपने राज्यों में अगर दाल की पैदावार की कुछ कमी हुई है, क्योंकि फसल का जो चक्र है, प्रकृति के नाते पानी की कमी के कारण अगर कमी हुई है तो आप उन राज्यों में जमाखोरों के खिलाफ, जो ब्लैकमार्केटिंग करने वाले हैं, उनके यहां रेड करिये और उस एडवायजरी के बावजूद भी केवल 14 राज्यों में रेड हुआ।

आपको जानकर आश्चर्य होगा कि जो अपने को आम आदमी की सरकार कहती है, दिल्ली में किसी भी ब्लैकमार्केटिंग और जमाखोरी करने वाले के खिलाफ दिल्ली सरकार ने एक भी रेड नहीं किया। यूपी. में एक भी रेड नहीं हुई। जबकि महाराष्ट्र में रेड्स हुई और हमने अकेले महाराष्ट्र से 86709 टन दाल जब्त करवाई, जो जमाखोरी में थी और इस एडवायजरी के बाद इन 14 राज्यों से हमने कहा था कि 23.11.2012 तक हमने लगभग 1 लाख 30 हजार टन का सीजर किया। इतना ही नहीं जब पिछले दिनों प्याज के दाम बढ़े तो उस समय भारत सरकार ने आवश्यक वस्तुओं की उपलब्धता के मूल्यांकन के लिए निर्णय लिया कि आलू के एक्सपोर्ट के लिए जो मिनिमम एक्सपोर्ट प्राइस होगा, वह कम से कम 450 यूएसडी से कम नहीं होगा, यह फैसला हमने 20.02.2015 को किया। इसी तरीके से प्याज का 250 पर मीट्रिक टन का 7.04.2015 को हमने फैसला किया। इस तरीके से हमने यही इतना बड़ा कदम नहीं उठाया, 26 मई, 2014 में सरकार बनी और उस सरकार के एक माह आठ दिन के बाद यह फैसला लिया गया कि अब कहीं किसी राज्य में अगर कोई कृत्रिम अभाव ब्लैकमार्केटिंग से करना चाहेगा, होर्डिंग से करना चाहेगा तो अभी तक यह बेलेबल ऑफेंस था, होर्डिंग करने वाले होर्डिंग करते थे, अगर उनके खिलाफ अरेंशियल कमोडिटीज एक्ट में राज्य सरकार ने कोई कार्रवाई की तो ये जाते थे और उन्हें खड़े-खड़े अदालत से जमानत मिल जाती थी।

में बघाई दुंगा कि केन्द्र में हमारी सरकार बनते ही इसे नॉन-बेलेबल ऑफिस किया गया कि अगर कोई जमाखोरी करेगा तो यह नॉन-बेलेबल ऑफिस होगा, जिससे कि कम से कम जनता को कोई कठिनाई न होने पाये। आज जिस तरीके के कदम उठाये गये हैं, भारत सरकार ने कहा कि हम इसे जीरो इम्पोर्ट ड्यूटी करते हैं और इसके नाते राज्य उसे लेना शुरू करे तो इससे स्वाभाविक है कि इससे यह काम होगा।

में एक बात कहना चाहता हूँ कि जब पिछले दिनों महंगाई की बात उठती थी तो महंगाई का पैमाना क्या होता है। या तो महंगाई का पैमाना यह होता है कि पेट्रोलियम के दामों में वृद्धि हो या महंगाई का असर तब आता है या तो कंज्यूमर प्राइस इंडेक्स (सीपीआई) में बढ़ोतरी हो या होलसेल प्राइस इंडेक्स (डब्ल्यूपीआई) में बढ़ोतरी हो या रेपो रेट में बढ़ोतरी हो। ये तीन ऐसे पैमाने हैं, जो केवल भारत के नहीं पूरी दुनिया के लिए मेजरमेंट हैं कि महंगाई बढ़ती है। निश्चित तौर से आदर्शणीय मोदी जी की सरकार बनने के बाद आप अगर एक नज़र देखें कि जो हमारी स्थिति थी कि आज जिस इन्फ्लेशन की बात करते हैं, हमारे सभी सदस्य इस बात के गवाह हैं, सन् 2014 तक हम सब लोग इस सदन के सदस्य थे, कि महंगाई डबल डिजिट में थी। आज तो सोना भी सस्ता है, सब्जियां भी सस्ती हैं, प्याज़ भी नियंत्रित भाव में हो गया है, तीस रुपये से नीचे आ गया है, आज स्टील सस्ता है, मैं समझता हूँ कि कई चीजें हैं, आप देखिए वे जो डबल डिजिट में थी, जो कंज्यूमर प्राइस इंडेक्स सन् 2009 में 14.97 परसेंट था, 2012 में 11.17 प्रतिशत सीपीआई था, यहां तक कि सन् 2013 में 9.13 और वही जब सन् 2014 में हमारी सरकार बनी है तो कंज्यूमर प्राइस इंडेक्स जो एक कंज्यूमर के लिए पूरी दुनिया का यह रेटिंग है, उस 2014 में डबल डिजिट से घट कर केवल 5.86 परसेंट सीपीआई हो गया है। यह निश्चित तौर से इस सरकार के लिए बहुत बड़ी उपलब्धि की बात है। यह नहीं कि सन् 2014 में 5.86 परसेंट कंज्यूमर प्राइस इंडेक्स हो गया तो उससे फिर बढ़ गए। सन् 2015 में वह निरंतर घट रहा है। आज 2015 में 5.75 परसेंट हमारा कंज्यूमर प्राइस इंडेक्स घटा है। निश्चित तौर से पूरी दुनिया हमें इसलिए देख रही है कि आज पूरी दुनिया महसूस करती है कि जिस तरीके से नरेन्द्र मोदी की सरकार बनने के बाद चाहे कंज्यूमर प्राइस इंडेक्स हो और जो होलसेल प्राइस इंडेक्स है, वह तो लगातार पिछले एक वर्ष से निगेटिव है, ये आंकड़े हैं, ये हमारे आंकड़े नहीं हैं, ये सरकारी आंकड़े हैं, आप जानते हैं कि ये समय-समय पर राष्ट्रीय अंतर्राष्ट्रीय जो संस्थाएं हैं, वे इसको जारी करती हैं। आज होलसेल प्राइस इंडेक्स -1.99 परसेंट है। पिछले एक वर्ष से हमारी होलसेल प्राइस इंडेक्स निगेटिव चल रही है, कोई बढ़ोतरी नहीं हुई। मान्यवर, हम कब कहते थे? कहते थे जब इन्वेस्टमेंट होगा तो विकास होगा, जब विकास होगा तो लोगों को रोजगार मिलेगा। इसका भी पैमाना अगर कोई है तो केवल सकल घरेलू उत्पाद है, जिसको जीडीपी कहते हैं।

आज आप देखिए कि जो चिंता का विषय था कि निरंतर हमारा जीडीपी घट रहा था। सन् 2014 तक स्थिति यह आ गई थी कि कोई भारत में इन्वेस्ट करने के लिए तैयार नहीं था। जो इन्वेस्टमेंट किया था, वह भी अपना इन्वेस्टमेंट वापस ले रहे थे और यहां तक कि टाटा और जो कभी बाहर नहीं जाते थे, वे लोग साऊथ अफ्रीका और यूरोप के दूसरे देशों में हमारे देश के डॉमेस्टिक इन्वेस्टमेंट थे, वे भी दुनिया के दूसरे मुल्कों में समझते थे कि अगर हम पूंजी निवेश करेंगे तो हम सुरक्षित रहेंगे, यह हमारे लिए लाभप्रद रहेगा। इसी तरीके से आप यकीन कर लीजिए कि फॉरेन इन्वेस्टमेंट आ ही नहीं रहा था। अगर किसी देश में न डॉमेस्टिक इन्वेस्टमेंट आएगा, न फॉरेन इन्वेस्टमेंट आएगा, तो किस तरीके से विकास बढ़ेगा अगर विकास नहीं होगा, पूंजी निवेश नहीं होगा, उद्योग धंधे नहीं आएंगे तो ये हज़ारों लाखों जो आईटी, सीएस कर के नौजवान निकल रहे हैं, आखिर उन लाखों हाथों को रोजगार कैसे मिलेगा? यह एक चिंता का विषय था। पिछली सरकार के समय में महंगाई ही नहीं बल्कि इन्वेस्टमेंट में भी एक रूकावट आ रही थी, चाहे वह डॉमेस्टिक हो या फॉरेन इन्वेस्टमेंट हो, लोगों को लगता था कि इस देश में कोई रोजगार के एवन्व्यूज नहीं होंगे।

में आपके माध्यम से कहना चाहता हूँ कि अभी जापान के प्रधान मंत्री आए थे और उन्होंने क्या कहा, मैं समझता हूँ कि अभी तक हम दुनिया से इंपोर्ट करते थे, पहली बार तानों को अब एहसास हो रहा है। अगर वे सामने होते तो मैं निश्चित तौर से कहता कि अब तो बघाई दीजिए, रोज आप मेक इन इंडिया स्टोचन का ऐसा मज़ाक कर रहे हैं, लेकिन अब अगर जापान के प्रधान मंत्री हमारे साथ एमओयू कर के गए हैं, अगर तीस हज़ार करें, भारत से जापान को जाएंगी, जो जापान विकास के मामले में दुनिया में राज कर रहा था, तो निश्चित तौर से आज वह मेक इन इंडिया वास्तविकता के धरातल पर उतर रहा है। केवल यह नहीं कि कितना बड़ा इन्वेस्टमेंट आया है, आपने देखा है कि करीब 85 हज़ार करोड़ रुपये का इन्वेस्टमेंट बुलेट ट्रेन के लिए आया। हमें याद है कि 15वीं लोक सभा में उसी सेन्ट्रल हॉल में हम सब लोग बैठे थे और अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति आए थे। अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति ने कहा कि हम यहाँ से 50 हज़ार रोजगार लेकर के जा रहे हैं। उनकी आँखों में चमक थी कि हम इन्वेस्टमेंट लेकर के जा रहे हैं। हमारे सेन्ट्रल हॉल में अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति खाड़े होकर के कह रहे थे, आप सब लोग मौजूद थे कि हम अपने देश के लिए रोजगार लेकर जा रहे हैं।

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Many hon. Members want to participate in this discussion. Please try to be very short. The Minister is going to reply tomorrow.

श्री जगदम्बिका पाल : महोदय, मैं अपनी पार्टी की तरफ से पहला वक्ता हूँ, थोड़ा शुरू कर देता हूँ। अब आप हमें मौका नहीं देंगे तो कैसे काम चलेगा। मैं अपनी सरकार की जीडीपी बता देता हूँ। मैं दो-चार मिनट का समय और लूँगा। मैं आपसे कहना चाहता था कि ये हमारे आँकड़े नहीं हैं। ये सेन्ट्रल स्टैटिस्टिक्स ऑफिस के आँकड़े हैं। मैं आज कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो जीडीपी वर्ष 2012-13 में 5.1 परसेंट थी, जिसे विकास दर कहते हैं, वर्ष 2013-14 में 6.9 थी, वह वर्ष 2014-15 में 7.2 परसेंट हुई, वर्ष 2014-15 से आगे बढ़कर 7.5 हुई। मुझे लगता है कि आने वाले दिनों में 8 परसेंट होगी। मुझे आज सदन के माध्यम से अपने देश की जनता को यह बताते हुए पूसन्नता हो रही है कि दुनिया में विकास दर के मामले में आज हमसे सिर्फ चाइना आगे हैं और भारत मोदी जी के नेतृत्व में पूरी दुनिया में नम्बर दो पर आ गया है। स्वाभाविक है कि जिस तरीके से हमारी जीडीपी बढ़ रही है, जिस तरीके से विकास बढ़ रहा है, आज पूरी दुनिया के लोगों का हमारे प्रति भरोसा बढ़ रहा है, पूरी दुनिया के लोगों का विश्वास बढ़ रहा है। आप पूरी दुनिया को देख रहे हैं, चाहे चाइना के राष्ट्रपति हों, चाहे जापान के प्राइम मिनिस्टर हों, चाहे आस्ट्रेलिया के हों, चाहे डेविड कैमरून इंग्लैंड के हों, चाहे बराक ओबामा जी हों, जिस तरीके से आज दुनिया में कहीं भी चाहे ब्रिक्स का सम्मेलन हो, चाहे यूनाइटेड नेशंस का सम्मेलन हो, जी-20 का सम्मेलन हो, आज उन सम्मेलनों में जब हमारे प्रधानमंत्री खाड़े होते हैं और दुनिया के राष्ट्रपतियों से बात करते हैं तो केवल उनका सम्मान नहीं बढ़ता है, भारत की 125 करोड़ जनता का सम्मान बढ़ता है और हमारी छाती चौड़ी होती है कि जिस तरीके से भारत पीछे खाड़ा था, जिस भारत में लोग समझते थे कि हमारा निवेश सुरक्षित नहीं होगा, आज वह भारत पूरी दुनिया को आकर्षित कर रहा है। अभी आपने देखा, अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति ने तारीफ की, यह बात नहीं है कि हम सतारूढ़ दल के हैं या भारतीय जनता पार्टी के सांसद हैं, इसलिए कह रहे हैं, आपने देखा कि जिस तरीके से टाइम मैगजीन में आया, जिस तरीके से खुद बराक ओबामा जी ने कहा कि अंडर डिज़रिप्शन जिस तरीके की डिनेवरी हो रही है और जिस तरीके का एक नया भारत बनाने की कल्पना कर रहे हैं, उस दिशा में वे कामयाब हो रहे हैं। मैं समझता हूँ कि आज जीडीपी जिस तरीके से लगातार बढ़ रही है, इससे विकास में भी तेजी आएगी और जब आर्थिक विकास की गति बढ़ेगी तो निश्चित तौर से रोजगार भी बढ़ेगा और गरीबी में भी कमी आएगी। पिछले दिनों हम कहते थे कि रेपो रेट की स्थिति देखिए। आज आप देखिए कि 29 जनवरी 2013 में रेपो रेट 7.75 था और आज जिस तरीके से वह रेपो रेट घट रहा है, रेपो रेट कम होना उस देश की अर्थव्यवस्था को बूट करने का एक पैमाना माना जाता है। आज वह रेपो रेट 29 सितम्बर 2015 को घटकर के 6.75 परसेंट है। ये आरबीआई के आँकड़े हैं। निश्चित तौर से यह साबित करता है कि आज भारतीय जनता पार्टी-एनडीए की, मोदी जी की सरकार को उनके नेतृत्व में इस देश की अर्थव्यवस्था को बूट मिल रहा है और आने वाले दिनों में केवल इकोनॉमी नहीं बढ़ेगी, केवल विकास दर ही नहीं बढ़ेगा, बल्कि देश के नौजवानों को निश्चित तौर से उनके हाथों में काम मिलेगा। जहाँ तक पेट्रोलियम के दामों की बात है, आप कहते हैं कि पेट्रोलियम के दामों में निरन्तर कमी आई। पहले हर देश के पहले पेट्रोलियम के दामों में बढ़ोतरी होती थी। आज लगातार जिस तरीके से पेट्रोलियम के दामों में घटोतरी हो रही है, हम जिस समय आए थे, उस समय 71.56 रूपए प्रति लीटर पेट्रोल का दाम था, डीजल का दाम 57.28 रूपए प्रति लीटर था। आज वह घटकर के पेट्रोल 60.48 रूपए प्रति लीटर और डीजल 45 रूपए प्रति लीटर है। स्वाभाविक है कि जब पेट्रोलियम के दामों को सरकार ने मार्केट ड्रिनेन पर छोड़ा है, क्योंकि पेट्रोलियम का दाम केवल हम तय नहीं कर सकते हैं, वह अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय मार्केट के अनुसार तय होता है। हमने अपने हाथों में कंट्रोल नहीं किया है, अगर आज वहाँ काम होगा तो निश्चित तौर से हमारे यहाँ भी उपभोक्ताओं को उसका लाभ मिलेगा, पेट्रोल के दामों में भी कमी आएगी, डीजल के दामों में भी कमी आएगी। मैं दो मिनट का समय और लूँगा। यह उस तरीके से होगा।

श्री भर्तृहरि महताब (कटक) : सैस तो बढ़ रहा है, कमी कहाँ आ रही है?

श्री जगदम्बिका पाल : बढ़ रहा है लेकिन राज्यों का उसमें कितना टैक्स है, यह तो आप सब जानते हैं क्योंकि आप समझदार हैं। जैसे वैंट का है। मैं समझता हूँ कि आज जो भी बढ़ रहा है, उसमें 50 प्रतिशत राज्यों को जा रहा है। अगर आज भी राज्य अपने उन टैक्स को कम कर दें तो मैं समझता हूँ कि भर्तृहरि महताब जी भी इस बात से एग्री करेंगे कि स्वाभाविक रूप से उपभोक्ताओं को उसका और लाभ मिलेगा। आपने यह नहीं देखा कि हम तो संघीय ढाँचे में विश्वास करते हैं। जिस तरह से 14वें फाइनेंस कमीशन में हमने डीवैल्युएशन में 32 परसेंट से 42 परसेंट किया है और अभी आप देखें कि कोयले के आँवण में सीधा सीधा पहली बार राज्यों को लाभ होने जा रहा है। जिस कोल स्कैम की बात होती थी, मैं आज उसमें नहीं जाना चाह रहा हूँ। ... (व्यवधान)

श्री भर्तृहरि महताब : कब होगा?

श्री जगदम्बिका पाल : मिलना शुरू हो गया है राज्यों को। ... (व्यवधान)

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Be it the Centre, be it the States, both have to control prices. It is their role to do it.

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: That is true.

HON. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: So, do not put your perspective from one side only.

श्री जगदम्बिका पाल : वह सही है, लेकिन मैं आज कहना चाहता हूँ कि आज निश्चित तौर से देश में महंगाई नहीं है। अगर नासिक में प्याज की फसल खराब हो गई तो नेचर के नाते, उत्पादन की कमी के नाते या ढाल के उत्पादन की कमी के नाते उसके दाम बढ़ें। फिर भी केन्द्र सरकार ने त्वरित रहते हुए बफर स्टॉक बनाने की बात की, ज़ीरो इंपोर्ट ड्यूटी की बात की, बाहर से इंपोर्ट करने की बात की जिससे एक एक व्यक्ति को वह मिले। स्वाभाविक है कि पहली बार भारत में कीमतों पर नियंत्रण है, आम आदमी को उपलब्ध है। केवल राज्यों को चाहिए कि वह एग्रीकल्चरल कमोडिटीज़ एक्ट या जो फूड सिक्यूरिटी एक्ट है, उसको लागू करें। कितने ही राज्यों ने अभी तक फूड सिक्यूरिटी एक्ट लागू नहीं किया है। उनको लागू करें और देश के 70 परसेंट गरीब लोगों की थाली तक पहुँचाने का काम करें। अगर राज्य उनकी थाली तक सामान पहुँचाने का काम नहीं कर सकते हैं, अगर एग्रीकल्चरल कमोडिटीज़ एक्ट का प्रयोग करके यह सुनिश्चित नहीं कर सकते कि जो गरीब किसी खेत, खलिहान, चौपाल या झोपड़ी में बैठा हुआ है, उसके पास वह कैसे जाएगा, तब तक यह कैसे सफल होगा। कुछ राज्य अभी अच्छा कर रहे हैं। अभी मैंने तमिलनाडु का उल्लेख किया है। कुछ राज्य अगर उसी तरह से और अच्छा करें तो अच्छा रहेगा। आज छत्तीसगढ़ सबसे अच्छा पीडीएस का काम कर रहा है। स्मन सिंह जी की सरकार ने अच्छा काम किया है। आज मध्य प्रदेश हो या छत्तीसगढ़ हो, इन राज्यों में जिस तरीके से पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम है, शायद इन राज्यों में किसी भी गरीब को आज ग्रेन, व्हीट वगैरह की दिक्कत नहीं थी। इसलिए मैं समझता हूँ कि आज कम से कम आप सभी इस बात से सहमत होंगे, प्रो. सौगत राय भी सहमत होंगे और देश भी इस बात से सहमत होगा कि आज कीमतें नियंत्रण में हैं।

PROF. SAUGATA ROY (DUM DUM): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am very lucky to be speaking on this price rise issue debate at the end of this Session, which was initiated by our learned colleague Shri P. Karunakaran.

Sir, I just heard Mr. Jagdambika Pal speaking on Obama, China, Britain, Japan, and how the Japanese Prime Minister praised us without speaking on the price rise. I shall not cast my net so wide. All I will say, he has said that the inflation is under control. Led by a spike in food prices, especially pulses, Consumer Price Index based inflation for November rose to 5.41 per cent from 5 per cent in October. Though the general inflation may be under control yet the food inflation is rising, which is a cause of concern for the common man.

Sir, I think, there is something wrong with the macro management of the economy because worldwide commodity prices are falling. Oil prices have fallen. Brent crude is now being sold at less than 35 dollar per barrel. So, in India, every price should have fallen. Still we see the costs of some essential commodities, particularly pulses, are rising. Also sometimes onions, sometimes tomatoes, start being sold at Rs 60 a kilo. The whole problem is that the Government has not passed on the benefit of oil price fall to the consumer. Rather the Finance Minister is taking the petroleum sector as a 'milk cow' to get more excise out of the same. If he had lowered the prices of petroleum products, this inflation would not have touched this level. This is wrong macro-economic policy. Jagdambika Pal Ji was eloquent on what Obama had said in press but may I say that 'Make in India' is still a slogan. The investments in India that were expected have not taken place. It is a dream which the dream-marchers of BJP are selling but it has not touched the reality. So, I shall confine to what Karunakaran Ji has started. He not only mentioned what is wrong but he also suggested ways of improving things. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the actual price rise which has mainly taken place in pulses.

Sir, the price of *arhar* which is commonly used by people rose to Rs. 200 a kilogram. Now, we have to remember that the retail and wholesale inflation in this fiscal was down but the inflation in prices particularly of pulses is undesirably high in a country where an average Indian spends five per cent of his food expenditure on pulses because pulses is the only vegetable protein which is available to the poor people.

Now, there are supply constraints due to lower production and higher demand. It is because of rising incomes. More people are buying pulses in the rural areas which has led to the spike in prices. There has been three consecutive monsoon shocks affecting the *kharif* season output and weather disturbances in March 2015 affecting the *Rabi* crop. The global pulse prices are elevated. The rupee has become weak because the rupee has fallen to 67 rupees per dollar. That means it is costlier to import today. The macro-management is again wrong. Why is the price of rupee falling while Obama is praising India? Sir, not only *arhar*, but *moong* and *urad* have been selling on the higher side at Rs. 112 and 152 respectively per kilogram. The Gram *dal* was retailed last month at Rs. 75 per kilogram. This is very high.

This year, it is expected that the *dal* price will be steepest in ten years. Now, at this point, I must mention that why the pulse price is so high. Let me mention that India has become self-sufficient in all food items in the last ten years. There are only two things which we are importing. One is pulses for which Rs. 18 to 25 thousand crore are spent every year for import and the other is edible oils for which we spend Rs. 30,000 crore. Now, I want to know whether the Government has any plan to improve the production of these things. Unfortunately, it is true that there is problem in pulse production. In West Bengal, for instance, farmers are spreading the *dal* seeds after the *kharif* crop has been harvested. So, they do not do separate cultivation for *dal*. The other problem is that this *dal* is not seen as a commodity to be produced because there is a fixed procurement price only for rice and wheat. So, if the farmers produce more rice and wheat, they can get more money through procurement prices. There is no proper mechanism for procurement of *dal*. As a result of which also this is happening. *Dal* is a leguminous crop. That means it does help in self-pollination. So, it is somewhat difficult to increase the productivity of pulses unless we really take to what Dr. Swaminathan had suggested. He suggested that let us build pulse villages – villages which will only produce pulses.

What Dr. Swaminathan had suggested has not been implemented. We had the Green Revolution in wheat; we have had a revolution in rice production. Today, 100 million tonnes of rice is produced in the country and nearly 100 million tonnes of wheat is produced in the country, which is why the Government can give the whole thing in a food security system. But *dal* compared to that is about 15 million. If I may mention, we have not given enough attention to the cultivation of *dal*.

Then, let me come to Ramvilas Paswan ji. What has the Food Ministry done after the *dal* prices started rising? They introduced zero import duty for *dal*. They also said that they have set up a price stabilisation fund at a cost of Rs.500 crore. They also said that the Government would import 5000 metric tonnes of tur. But this is a drop in the ocean. Every year roughly three to five million tonnes of pulses are imported. If the Government imports only 5000 metric tonnes, how is it going to solve the problem?

Then, why have the prices of pulses risen? Please do not mind my saying so but there is a saying in the country that the political base of the BJP consists of traders in different cities. Whenever the BJP Government is in power, they think that it is a good opportunity to raise prices and make money. I know that Ramvilas ji does not belong to BJP, he belongs to the Lohia and Jaiprakash variety of politics. But what can he do? He is alone in a big Cabinet of BJP people. Why I am blaming that some traders are responsible for this – please listen to me. What are the main places we import

from? The biggest import centre last year was Canada followed by Australia, followed by Russia, then followed by Myanmar and then some African countries like Malawi.

I was in Vancouver, Canada recently. It is true that all these dals come from Vancouver. But Vancouver so far away that it takes a long time. As a result of which the import is never timely. It was clear in the beginning of this year with the deficient monsoon that there will be shortage of dal. Actually, compared to 23 million tonnes of demand our production would be around 17.2 million tonnes. If we had imported in time, it would not have happened. But the problem is that Ramvilas ji does not have import in his hand. Import of dal is totally left to the private traders. These people delay the import till the prices can rise further. My suggestion is that the import should be in time. The Government should ensure that import takes place in time.

Then, sometimes foolishly, what happens is that six ships landed in Mumbai port. The Maharashtra Government has introduced a law that one cannot hoard beyond one and a half quintals of dal. So, the ships stayed in Mumbai port for 15 days before the problem was resolved and in the meantime the prices rose further. I think that one major step would be to import on time and that too from countries which are closer to India like Myanmar and even Malawi, a country in Africa. But now the idea should be to produce more pulses in this country and make the farmers interested in it.

What is happening is that the farmers are unwilling to grow pulses due to price risk, low and declining profitability. A high fluctuation in prices is meant that farmers are sure of getting stable returns. This has led to a large scale substitution of area under pulse cultivation with other high value crops which give comparatively higher returns. Pulses are highly risk prone because most of the production is rain-dependent. Eight-five per cent of pulses are grown in areas where there is no irrigation. Merely 16 per cent of the total area is covered by irrigation. Hence, the crop is highly vulnerable to monsoon shocks. So, the Government should have some plans to improve it. But where will it do the planning? On the one hand, we want more agricultural production and on the other hand, Shri Jaitley is cutting Plan outlay on agriculture. What is the position? In 2013-14, budget for agriculture was Rs. 17,788 crore. In 2014-15, it was Rs. 11,531 crore. Compared to 2013-14 actuals, this year's Budget Estimates are only Rs. 11,657 crore. So, it has come down substantially in comparison to what it was in 2013-14. Unless you spend more on agriculture, how can you expect that we shall be self-sufficient in any crop?

Sir, I am almost winding up my speech. For cotton, we had allowed GM – genetically modified - or Bt. cotton. Now India is one of the biggest exporters of cotton. We have not introduced GM crops in other areas - neither pulses nor edible oils. I say that by all means, take all precautions so that they are not dangerous either to land or to human beings, but unless you introduce the modern technological crops, it is not possible to do it.

What has the Minister insisted on? He instructed the States to resort to de-hoarding. As I said, out of 17 million tonnes of production, how much has the de-hoarding yielded? Sir, you will be surprised to learn that the total amount de-hoarded is only 1,33,000 tonnes. Seventeen million means one crore 70 lakh tonnes. Out of that, in de-hoarding, you have discovered only 1,30,000 tonnes. The strange thing about it is that this quantity is lying in government godowns. Out of 1,30,000 tonnes seized by way of de-hoarding, only 26,000 tonnes were disposed of while the rest is lying with the Government. So, what is the point in going for de-hoarding, if after de-hoarding, you are not able to distribute those stocks?

Sir, the present problem in prices, apart from macro economic management, is led by rise in pulse prices followed sometimes by onions and sometimes by tomatoes which cost Rs. 60 per kilogram. But my fear is that unless the Government takes a positive policy for improving edible oil production, the edible prices, for which we are dependent on imports, will also rise. So, we are very concerned that the poor man may not be able to buy it. Earlier, he had rice and onions. Onions became costly and the rice is cheap. Now with improvement in income, he took to pulses, lentils because a large population of India is vegetarian and for them pulses are the only protein. Now, we are depriving people of India of this vegetable protein. It has become a luxury rather than an essential thing to build up the bodies of our children.

Even, milk prices rose. So, I would urge upon Shri Ram Vilas Paswan that he must be a little firm on traders. Do not leave the whole trading to private traders and ask the States, follow it up, for serious de-hoarding operations and distribution of the quantities seized. Take quick policy decisions, because next year also there will be pulses shortage, so that we are able to import in time.

With this, Sir, I say that it is a serious situation and the Government should rise to the occasion. I am sure Mr. Paswan is doing his best but maybe his hands are tied by economic policies of the Government as a whole. But I do hope that this happens in the interest of the common people of the country.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to take part in the discussion on price rise raised by Shri P. Karunakaran, and I hope the discussion concludes today and the Minister also is able to reply. At the outset I would say this is not the sole responsibility of the Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs because this also involves the Ministry of Finance to a very great extent.

Before coming into those details I would say, Sir, that India's official numbers say retail food inflation was 2.15 per cent in July but the actual situation, however, was the opposite. Skyrocketing onion and other prices showed food prices were more than doubled from last year. The sharp spike in Dal prices maybe among the biggest worries for Indian households today. The study by CRISIL says this year's increase is the steepest in a decade. Inflation may have dropped significantly owing to reduction in oil prices from last year's level, but what is also true is that most Indians still find prices of goods and services consumed on a daily basis growing beyond their comfort level.

This year's deficit monsoon has not only affected pulses production but has also severely damaged growth of vegetable production. The scarcity situation has all the more been worsened by the unscrupulous middlemen and hoarders. The amount of care and vigilance expected to be maintained by the Government is also wanting. India's dependency on imported pulses grew from 2.7 million tonnes in 2010-11 to almost four million tonnes in 2015-16. Some say we have developed a taste for Dal, it has become our staple food, but is it not falling off our plate because of soaring prices? The Dal is on the boil, as has been mentioned. Pulses are falling off the poor man's plate. Prices have hit the middleclass. I am constrained

to say here that food price inflation is rearing its head again. The steady rise in the Consumer Price Index over the last four months suggests that inflation risk remains. CPI

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): What about CPM!

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: Consumer Price Index, as we call CPI, inflation for November is at 5.41 per cent is running well below the RBI's target of six per cent for January. But food prices are displaying signs of flaring up again.

The price rise can be attributed to the structural problems that persist in our economy. These structural problems were due to supply constraints that discouraged adequate supply of food grains and other essential commodities to the households. On the other hand, being a consumption-driven nation, the demand for essential commodities is high. Thus, the demand and supply mismatch contributes to the price rise.

Our dietary pattern has undergone a change, no doubt. Even in villages it has undergone change. Demand in households has gone up. But the price rise in India is not because of globalization, it is because of domestic structural problems which affect the supply of essential commodities. I may here give an example. In 80s, 500 gm of butter was only Rs.9. Today it is Rs.189. In 35 years there has been a 200 per cent increase. Price of six eggs used to be Rs 18. Today, it is Rs 30. That is 66.66 per cent increase. One kilogram mutton stood at Rs 180 in early 2000s. Today, it is Rs 480 per kilogram. That is 166.66 per cent increase. I have quoted three instances- butter, egg and mutton. These are all food items that normally middle class people take once a week. (Interruptions) I am also coming to the price of sugar. As for vegetable, in season, no vegetable was more than Rs 10 per kilogram. Today, even during season, the price does not come down less than Rs 30 in retail. Are you not surprised? Should we say that it is supply side factors that have contributed to this resurgence in food prices. If the Government does not have an answer, then whom should one blame? I would state that the policy response to this supply pressure has so far relied heavily on firefighting such as creation of buffer stocks, higher imports, crackdown on hoarders and stock hoarding- four metric tonnes of stock hoarding limits of crops. Measures to raise production through higher support prices or input subsidies have been rather late in coming.

Here I would like to mention two reports. One report is that of the Standing Committee on Finance which was submitted in 2009. I am just quoting the second last area where the Committee had found out, when it was dealing with the subject of inflation and price rise.

"Monitoring of prices is the primary responsibility of the Department of Consumer Affairs through the Price Monitoring Cell, which is stated to be monitoring the prices of 17 essential commodities. The retail prices on daily basis and wholesale prices on weekly basis are collected by the Monitoring Cell from different centers across the country. Price policy and management of inflation at macro level is within the purview of the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs). The Department of Food and Public Distribution is charged with the prime responsibility of management of the food economy of the country."

You see the dichotomy here. ... (Interruptions)

"This department is supposed to keep a close watch on the stock and price levels of foodgrains and to ensure their adequate availability at reasonable prices in different parts of the country. However, during the course of examination of the subject, the Committee have found that various issues concerning inflation and price rise, that required to be addressed in a coordinated manner, were being considered in isolation by the respective Department alone. Neither the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs) nor the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution could provide a holistic perspective in the matter. The Department of Consumer Affairs, which is the nodal monitoring agency, seems to have been reduced to a mere data collecting/compiling organization. The inputs collected by them do not appear to be influencing price policy, which is the domain of the Ministry of Finance."

This is the report which the Committee had given to the Parliament in 2009. I do not know how far Shri Ram Vilas Paswan will be able to throw true light on the action the then Government had taken and steps that have been taken by this Government in the last 18 months. The suggestion was to bring in a co-ordination between specific Ministries of Finance and Consumer Affairs, as the Committee recommended.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Sir, when we started this discussion we demanded that some Minister from the Ministry of Finance should be here. He has made a strong point but no one is here. We have pointed it out last time.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Food Minister is here; other Ministers are here. They will take care. The Home Minister is also here.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: The recommendation was an effective mechanism for inter-Ministerial co-ordination and follow up to be put in place for facilitating prompt response. This was the recommendation of the Standing Committee. Normally, after the Standing Committee submits a Report, an Action Taken Note is also submitted. I went through the Action Taken Note. This Action Taken Note was submitted in December, 2013; the Report was submitted earlier in 2009. So, the Action Taken Note came after four years. This was basically relating to the issue of sugar. Now, that hon. Member has left after raising the issue of sugar.

The Action Taken Note states that 'Any subsidisation of sugar import by Central government would discourage the sugar mills merchants to contract import of sugar.' However, the Ministry seems to have conveniently ignored the fact that the decision not to import sugar by Central public sector agencies at a crucial juncture eventually led to a demand-supply mismatch of sugar in the market. This was relating to the sugar aspect. But the crux of the issue which I had raised in the main Committee was a thorough inquiry into this matter so that persons responsible for how the sugar price made a spiral increase during that period in question leading traders to make windfall gains could be identified and brought to book. We are yet to know what steps the then Government had taken and who were responsible. This was a clear-cut Report of the Standing Committee asking the then Government to take action. I would request the present Minister to find out this Report and to also convey to this House what steps have been taken. We would all be obliged if the special monitoring mechanism that the committee had suggested during that time is set up so that independently the Government can act. It is not the sole responsibility only of the Consumer Affairs Ministry.

Now, I want to come to a very sticky question. Tell me, do you not believe that the *dal* crisis which recently hit the country was more man-made than natural? I may quote here from India Today TV, which through a special investigation has revealed the *modus operandi*. *Arhar dal* was available in the market for less than Rs. 70 a kilogram. Now, it is Rs. 180. It went up to more than Rs. 200; now, it is Rs. 180. The *satta* operators are having a field day. They manufactured artificial scarcity. Their tentacles spread from Myanmar, all the way to African countries which are major pulse producers. Big importers based in Mumbai procure and take delivery of stock but hoard it at foreign ports. Prof. Saugata Roy said that the ship came to Mumbai but that was happening in UPA term. The stocks were brought; it was languishing in Kolkata Port, it was languishing in Mumbai Port. That was happening during that period. We had also raised it in the House. Now, what has happened this time is that the hoarders are purchasing them from foreign countries and they are hoarding it in Africa, they are hoarding it in Singapore. They are not allowing the ships to pass the Malacca Strait. They are being hoarded there until there is a conducive atmosphere in our country and until the price has risen to such a height.

श्री राम विलास पासवान : आप सजेशन भी दीजिए कि इसे कैसे कंट्रोल किया जाए।

श्री भर्तृहरि महाबाब : मैं सजेशन दूंगा, वे जो वहाँ से परचेस कर रहे हैं, लेकिन मार्केट तो यहीं है, यहीं तो बिकेने, उनको आप परमिशन दे रहे हैं। उनके फॉरेन एक्सचेंज की डिस्क्रिप्शन आप कर रहे हैं। Your monitoring mechanism is not only confined within the State. You have to look beyond the borders. अगर कोई म्यांगमार से परचेस कर रहा है, कोई अफ्रीका से परचेस कर रहा है, कोई बैंकूवर से परचेस कर रहा है, वहाँ भी आपके इंडियन मिशन हैं।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : हमने पता लगाया है, जो बात आप कह रहे हैं, इसमें सत्वाई है और यह गंभीर भी है। हम तीन-चार महीने से इसके लिए प्रयास कर रहे हैं। यह अच्छी बात है, हमारे जयंत सिन्हा जी आ गये हैं, लेकिन जो बाहर की जो बातें आपने कही कि जो इम्पोर्टर्स हैं, इस बार भी 45 लाख टन इम्पोर्ट हुआ है। हमारा प्रोडक्शन घटा है। हमारा प्रोडक्शन 170 लाख टन हुआ है। डिमांड 226 लाख टन है। 45 लाख टन बाहर से इम्पोर्ट हुआ है और होना चाहिए था। लेकिन एक दिन मेल टूटे में भी छपा था कि बाहर से ही लोग खरीदते हैं और वहाँ पोर्ट पर रखते हैं और जब यहाँ धीरे-धीरे दाम बढ़ते हैं, तो वहाँ से उसे रितीज करते हैं। हमने कॉमर्स डिपार्टमेंट से भी पूछा। इस संबंध में हमने बैठक भी की। उसमें सरकार कि लोग विज्ञाना खरीदते हैं और कहीं रखते हैं, हम लोगों के पास इसका कोई हिसाब नहीं रहता है। हमारे पास केवल तभी रहता है जब वह हमारे देश में पहुंचता है। उस संबंध में मैंने कहा कि यदि आपके पास कुछ सुझाव हों, तो उसे बताएँ।

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: How much more time you are going to take?

*m06

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: I would conclude my speech within three to four minutes.

Sir, it seems the Government is aware of what has happened. The Government is also aware why this situation has cropped up but what I find to my dismay is the Government is not aware of how to tackle this situation. This Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs does not have the scope to go beyond the borders but there are other agencies within the Government which can tackle that situation. If you want my suggestion we can share it, but it is necessary. It is not unique for our country alone. There are other countries also which have faced this type of constraint. Let us understand how they have tackled. We are dealing with food price. We are dealing with essential commodities. How have others tackled this?

If some of our traders, importers buy certain things from foreign market and store it in foreign ports, there are provisions. We have now already gone into global trade. We can intervene because ultimately the market is not there. Market is in India. Ultimately he has to bring it to India to sell the product. Here I would say that an investigation has been made and these operations, as we have said, have already come to light. You have also mentioned that months have passed. Similar operations had occurred in the UPA regime but there was no one to respond to. At least this Government is responding, is asking for suggestions. I think we can tackle it. There are laws. I think the Consumer Affairs Department is actually implementing that law. If I purchase food stock at a certain price with an intention to sell it in the market, how much profit can I earn? The Government has to intervene there and it can fix a price. If the import price is this much, if you have purchased it at such and such price you can sell it at this price. You cannot sell a dal which you have purchased from a foreign market at Rs.80 per kg. at Rs.180 per kg. in India.

16.00 hours

Then there will be transport and other costs.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Anyway, the Ministry of Finance would know the price when they are clearing the stock. They know the purchase price also.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: Sir, it has to be.

I would like to understand from the Government why the food prices are up even as Wholesale Price Index decline continues. WPI based deflation continues for 13th month in a row which is the longest since 1975. Has anyone in the Government gone into this aspect? Can anyone explain it from the Government side? If you are aware of any answer, please tell us what are you doing about it?

With these words, I conclude.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): Sir, as per the Business, we have Insolvency and Bankruptcy Bill listed in the name of Minister of Finance. There were some suggestions from different quarters that this needs a deeper scrutiny. Therefore, I am holding discussions with our friends in the other House also whether we can send it to a Joint Committee of Parliament so that a thorough study can be made.

Our friends in Lok Sabha have already given consent but I need to get a consent of the Members of the Rajya Sabha. I have to be frank with the House that if I get the consent then we would take that route. Otherwise, we have to take up the Bill after the other Bill.

So I would request the Deputy-Speaker, Sir, to allow discussion on the Payment of Bonus Bill now. Meanwhile, I will complete the consultation process in the Rajya Sabha and come back to the House.

The discussion on price rise will continue afterwards.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the House agrees.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): The Minister of Finance is also here. If he can throw some light on this aspect, it would be good. Otherwise, tomorrow again the things get diluted.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The discussion on price will continue afterwards.

16.04 hours