

(a) whether the Government have issued any guidelines to the State Governments including the Government of Kerala to prohibit the sale of common salt for human consumption;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have received any objection from the Government of Kerala against the decision of the Union Government regarding the amendment in the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1955 and demanded its withdrawal;

(d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(e) the details of those companies which are producing iodised salt on large scale in the country; and

(f) the action taken by the Government to lift the ban on the sale of common salt?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) and (b) The recommendations of Central Council of Health & F.W. meeting held in January 1997, the highest policy formulating body in the Health Sector where all Health Ministers are Members, were sent to all States/U.Ts., to take appropriate action including issue of notification banning the sale of salt, other than iodated salt, for direct human consumption in order to control, prevent and eliminate Iodine Deficiency Disorders which are prevalent in the country.

(c), (d) and (f) The Government of Kerala has taken the position that while popularising the use of iodised salt the use of common salt should not be prohibited in view of the cost factor.

Iodine supplementation through salt is the simplest and most cost effective method to combat Iodine Deficiency Disorder. Government has taken measures in the interest of public health under Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955 stipulating that salt sold for direct human consumption must be compulsorily iodised with effect from 27.5.98.

(e) Only M/s. Tata Chemical Ltd. at Mithapur and three other units are producing iodated salt on a large scale in the country.

Recently, Andhra Pradesh High Court has issued orders suspending the notification and a similar case is before the High Court at Gwalior. The matter is subjudice.

### **HIV Infected Pediatric Population**

\*490. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATER : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the country has millions of HVI-positive cases;

(b) if so, the total number, out of them are in pediatric age group; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for checking the increase in HIV-infected pediatric population?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI)

(a) As per the reports available with NACO, 77881 HIV positive and 6059 AIDS cases have been reported as on June 30, 1998. However, WHO/UNAIDS in a recent report has estimated that about 4 million people are living with HIV infection in our country.

(b) Indepth analysis of 5014 AIDS cases shows that 199 (3.89%) cases are reported to be under 15 years of age.

(c) Prevention of perinatal transmission is an important strategy to control the spread of HIV infection from HIV infected mothers to children. Various studies have shown that use of AZT (Azidothymidine) can reduce the risk of transmission of HIV infection. Clinical trials on use of AZT for prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child will be initiated in various institutions in the country, to assess the efficacy of AZM in Indian context. Based on the outcome of these trials, use of AZT in the pregnant women will be included as an integral component of the programme

### **Mahajan Committee Report**

\*491. SHRI T. GOVINDAN :  
SHRI LAKSHMAN CHANDRA SETH :

Will be Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the likely impact on the price of sugar in various States particularly in Kerala after the implementation of Mahajan Committee Report on decontrol/discontinuation of sugar from P.D.S.;

(b) whether some States have opposed the supply and sale of sugar through Public Distribution System;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Union Government have decided to seek the views from the States on Mahajan Committee report before framing the sugar policy;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA) : (a) to (f) The various recommendations made in the Mahajan Committee's Report include those relating to decontrol of the Sugar Industry and discontinuance of supply of Sugar in the Public Distribution System (PDS). The various Ministries/Departments of the Central Government, as also the State Governments/UT Administrations, have been requested to offer their comments in writing on the recommendations contained in the Report. A meeting of the State Ministers in charge of Food, Civil Supplies and Sugar Industry Departments, was held on 25.6.1998 to ascertain the views of the State Governments on the various recommendations contained in the Report. Representatives of 23 States/UTs participated in the meeting. In the course of this meeting, a variety of views were expressed on issues, *inter alia*, relating to modalities for running the PDS; the norm for allocating Sugar to States/UTs under the PDS; the need for continuation of distribution control; the need for higher allocation of sugar for festivals; problems faced on account of high stocks of Sugar with the Mills; problems on account of arrears of payment of sugarcane price to farmers; and the need for timely issue of Sugar Release Orders. Representatives of some State Governments/UTs, including Kerala State, expressed reservations in respect of the recommendations for discontinuance of supply of Sugar under the PDS. No final decision was taken on any of the issues. The matter is under examination in the Government.

#### **Leila Seth Commission**

\*492. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the findings of the Leila Seth Commission;

(b) whether the Government have accepted the findings and recommendations of the said report;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Govt. on the basis of the report?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) to (d) The Government of N.C.T. of Delhi appointed Justice Leila Seth Commission of Inquiry for the purpose of making an inquiry into the circumstances leading to the death of Shri J.M. Rajan Pillai while he was in judicial custody in Central Jail, Tihar, New Delhi. The main findings of the Commission are summarised below :

(1) There was no evidence to substantiate the allegation of conspiracy behind Shri Pillai's death;

(2) The allegation that Shri Pillai was beaten by three jail officials on the evening of 4.7.95 was concocted and far from the truth;

(3) Shri Pillai's 'mulahiza' i.e. initial medical examination could not take place on 4.7.95, the day he was arrested and remanded to judicial custody, as the jail formalities of his entry were completed at about 2 p.m and no doctor was available at that time or in the evening for the 'mulahiza'. It could not be done on 5.7.95 or 6.7.95 either as he had to leave for Court in the morning and came back only in the evening. Consequently, the 'mulahiza' of Shri Rajan Pillai took place only on the morning of 7.7.95 when his condition had already started deteriorating and he had high grade fever. The lack of medical personnel and the faulty system in the jail were, therefore, responsible for the 'mulahiza' not being done as soon as possible; and negligence cannot be attributed to any particular individual in this regard.

(4) When Shri Rajan Pillai was remanded to judicial custody on 4.7.95, the designated Magistrate addressed an urgent confidential letter to the R.M.O., Central Jail, Tihar enquiring about the ailment of Shri Rajan Pillai and also sent a copy of the application which was moved in the court by the counsel of Shri Pillai for his medical examination/treatment. The letter reached Jail No. 4 in the evening and was received by the Assistant Superintendent who did not, however, ensure that it reached the right quarters;

(5) There was no doubt that Shri Rajan Pillai was a sick man, having a chronic disease like alcoholic cirrhosis