

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

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## LOK SABHA

*Monday, August 8, 1983 / Sravana 17,  
1905 (Saka)*

*The Lok Sabha met at three minutes past  
Eleven of the Clock*

(MR. SPEAKER *in the chair*)

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### Price Rise of Essential Commodities

\*202. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of essential commodities have continued to rise during the last few months;

(b) if so, the details; and

(c) what measures are being taken to expand the present net work of the public distribution system in the country?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI M.S. SANJEEVI RAO): (a) to (c) : A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

#### Statement

(a) There has been some rise in the prices of some essential commodities during the last few months.

(b) The information is given in a statement at Annex.

(c) Under the New 20-Points Programme, the coverage of the public distribution system is sought to be expanded by opening of new fair price shops, including mobile shops for far-flung areas and shops to cater to industrial workers, students' hostels etc. State Governments have been told to strengthen and streamline the system so that it could better serve the consumers.

#### Statement

Monthly Indices of Wholesale Prices of Selected  
Commodities during March, April, May and June, 1983.

Commodity/  
Sub-Groups.

Wholesale Price Index Numbers

March, 83

April, 83

May, 83

June, 83.

	March, 83	April, 83	May, 83	June, 83.
Rice	273.1	278.0	283.8	293.1
Wheat	247.7	225.4	210.4	210.5
Jowar	229.3	223.4	230.2	229.7
Bajra	234.4	242.8	257.8	249.3
Barley	289.5	249.9	249.2	258.4

Commodity/ Sub-Groups.	Wholesale Price Index Numbers			
	March, 83	April, 83	May, 83	June, 83
Maize	287.5	270.2	282.2	292.6
Ragi	228.2	233.7	245.2	247.3
Gram	274.8	281.4	284.6	282.4
Arhar	335.6	339.8	348.1	358.5
Moong	293.2	312.7	332.7	335.4
Masoor	275.3	286.5	306.6	308.7
Urad	279.3	302.3	314.4	320.9
Potatoes	134.4	162.7	204.3	204.5
Onions	275.2	272.3	300.4	324.0
Oranges	317.6	323.8	340.5	338.5
Bananas	257.2	302.2	331.5	272.8
Milk	229.6	231.1	241.3	241.7
Eggs	160.3	166.1	150.8	169.8
Fish	434.8	438.9	455.3	457.5
Meat	375.6	375.6	375.6	375.6
Black Pepper	175.2	185.2	214.6	211.5
Chillies	119.0	118.9	117.1	115.1
Turmeric	243.8	268.6	307.1	297.1
Tea	370.5	369.2	392.0	443.4
Coffee	148.4	152.6	158.9	160.3
Kerosene	371.0	341.1	341.1	341.1
Atta	226.8	235.4	248.4	248.4
Maida	234.9	468.4	264.6	264.6
Suji	230.2	241.8	259.3	259.3
Biscuits	229.8	229.8	229.8	229.8
Bread	231.8	237.2	245.4	245.4
Sugar	222.5	225.8	234.4	234.6
Khandsari	227.8	239.6	263.3	270.5

Commodity/ Sub-Groups.	Wholesale Price Index Numbers			
	March, 83	April, 83	May, 83	June, 83
Gur	239.6	275.5	311.2	318.9
Coke	463.5	463.5	463.5	463.5
Vanaspati	254.8	254.7	256.9	258.1
Groundnut oil	283.2	289.9	304.4	304.0
Mustard oil	243.1	245.2	256.9	268.4
Coconut oil	260.8	257.4	257.9	283.4
Gingelly oil	287.3	298.0	306.2	282.9
Kardi oil	264.7	283.3	312.1	304.3
Cottonseed oil	253.6	266.9	293.4	293.3
Salt	203.8	210.3	210.1	206.8
Cigarettes	247.3	247.3	247.3	247.3
Bidi	217.7	217.7	217.7	217.7
Cotton cloth (mills)	247.4	248.0	248.0	250.9
Handloom & Powerloom cloth	223.5	219.7	225.4	227.3
Paper	278.2	294.0	300.3	299.6
Tyres	321.8	321.8	329.8	321.8
Tubes	324.4	324.4	329.9	324.4
Rubber & Plastic Shoes	162.6	162.6	162.6	162.6
Drugs & Medicines	176.1	176.1	176.1	177.0
Soda Ash	367.2	373	383.3	394.4
Soap	240.6	240.2	247.0	251.6
Synthetic detergents	297.3	297.3	297.3	297.3
Tooth Paste	177.5	177.5	177.5	177.5
Tooth Powder	242.4	242.4	242.4	242.4
Matches	129.0	129.0	129.0	129.0
Cement	399.1	399.7	399.7	399.7
Hurricane Lanterns	235.4	235.4	235.4	235.4
Electric Lamps	237.4	235.7	240.3	233.2

Commodity/ Sub.Groups.	Wholesale Price Index Numbers			
	March, 83	April, 83	May, 83	June, 83
Dry Cells	264.5	264.5	264.5	262.7
Razor Blades	119.9	130.1	145.5	145.5
Utensils	283.1	283.8	283.8	283.8
Tooth Brush	158.3	158.3	158.3	158.3
All Commodities	294.3	297.0	304.6	307.1

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : The statement to which the Minister refers conceals much more than it reveals like a good bikini. I would draw your attention to the question. The question never asked for wholesale prices of essential commodities. If he says that it does not specify which prices I wanted to know, then he should have supplied the figures relating to both wholesale and retail prices. But he has chosen conveniently to omit retail prices and supplied some chart of wholesale prices only.

I would like to point out here that the prices of essential commodities is a matter which affects the common people in this country. That is the importance of this question.

Now there is a consumer Price index the figures of which he has not supplied. I want to know whether it is a fact or not that the all India Consumer Price Index which stood in May last year at 462 rose to 521 in May this year, that is, a rise of 12.8%. If that is so, because I believe that the basis for calculating the rate of inflation is never the wholesale price rate, but it is the consumer price index and it has risen by 12.8% in one year and has risen by 13 points in one month, from April to May this year, which is supposed to be the highest jump in a single month that has ever taken place, does this not prove that a double digit inflation has some back again despite all the denials of the Government ?

(Interruptions)

SHRI M. S. SANJEEVI RAO : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to bring to the notice of this august House that the drought in 1982 was the worst for the entire century, In 1979 . . . (Interruptions) let me conclude-

MR. SPEAKER : Why are you interrupting ? Let him answer first. He is answering that part.

SHRI M. S. SANJEEVI RAO: Sir, in 1979 drought and floods, the hectares affected were 41 million ; it affected a population of 24 crores whereas for 1982, the hectares affected were to the tune of 48 million and it has affected 31 crores of population. Also let me tell you that the amount of Central assistance given in 1982-83 was to the tune of Rs. 738 crores compared to Rs. 326 crores in 1979-80 compared to this, please remember the inflation in June 1979 was 9.6% and rose to 22.1% in June 1980 whereas it rose from 2.1% in June 1982 to 7.5 in June 1983. In regard to what Mr. Gupta was saying, I do not agree that the consumer Price index will cover the entire country, it takes service charges like health service and all that. It caters to some of the industrial workers. You cannot compare it to the wholesale price index.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, one thing you will agree. The reply shows that the Government is not bothered at all about this price rise. They are very much satisfied. Now, may I ask him a question ? On the 27th of last month, that is, just about a fortnight ago, a detailed reply had been given on a similar question in the

other House in regard to starred question No. 42. There also they have taken the wholesale price index—not the retail price index. There I find they have given a long list of all essential commodities. For the six months, that is, from December 1982 to June 1983, out of 66 articles shown here, Government has admitted that there has been an increase in the index figure of 49 articles and only in 8 articles, there has been a slight fall. Now, sir, he did not answer the point about the consumer price index going up. It shows that the inflation rate is going up.

MR. SPEAKER : He told about the inflation rate.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : He is pleased with the fact that the inflation rate after coming down to 2.7 has gone up to 7. Anyway there is a second part to the question. I ask my second question. He has replied that the coverage of the public distribution system is sought to be expanded by opening up a few fair price shops. This is the standard reply which is always given. It is not a question of opening up of a few fair price shops only. By opening up a few more shops, the system is not going to be improved. There are complaints but I do not know if you are aware of these. Everybody is complaining including Members of Parliament. The regular supply of all the commodities which they said under the 20 Point programme would be supplied through these outlets are never available. Sometimes, for weeks together particular items are not available. Therefore, it is not a question of expanding the number of shops only. What are they doing to see that adequate stocks of all the commodities which are considered essential are supplied, and people are not unduly harassed and made to wait for weeks and months sometimes, before they can get their requirement.

SHRI M. S. SANJEEVI RAO : I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. members that from about 2.35 lakh Fair Price Shops in January 1980, we have increased them to the tune of 2.90 lakhs by the end of July 1983. We have not only increased the number of Fair Price Shops during this period, but from January 1983 to August 1983, the Central Government has allotted to the tune of 10.89 million tonnes

of foodgrains compared to 9.67 million tonnes of food grains (both wheat and rice) in the previous eight month period. Also we have increased the allocation of edible oil to the tune of 3.21 lakh of tonnes as compared to 2.63 lakhs last year, an increase of 22.1%. We do agree that this extraordinary situation is prevailing. That is the very reason why quota of the essential commodities like foodgrains, edible oil and kerosene has been increased. I would appeal to my friends to see that they also influence the State Governments respectively, to see that the coordinated effort is done so that all the essential commodities reach the common man.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : The position is that we will be having a full discussion on this very subject this week. The Business Advisory Committee will decide it tomorrow and in that case I can pass on to the next question. Otherwise we will not be doing justice to this.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: We can now ask him for clarifications and the discussions, will be there later.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Sir, you have saved him.

MR. SPEAKER : If you don't want a discussion on this subject, then I can allow him to reply to all your questions. It is only for your sake that I am doing it.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR : Sir, sugar and other essential commodities are sold in black-market. 70% of the country's population are very much affected.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Either you have a discussion on this subject or this kind of questions and answers. Either of the two you can have. I have already said that we are going to have a discussion on this subject.

*(Interruptions)*

**अध्यक्ष महोदय :** इसी लिए मैं आपसे अर्ज कर रहा हूँ कि उस डिसकशन में सारे प्वाइंट आ जायेंगे।

(व्यवधान)

**SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR :** This question concerns the problem of the down-trodden people and the middle-class people.

(व्यवधान)

**श्री रशीद मसूद :** डिसकशन में सारे प्वाइंट्स का जवाब नहीं आएगा।

**अध्यक्ष महोदय :** रशीद साहब आपको गलतफहमी है। उसमें सारे प्वाइंट आ जायेंगे।

(व्यवधान)

**प्रमाणित बीजों की सप्लाई**

\*203. **श्री नरसिंह मकवाना :** क्या कृषि मन्त्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या किसानों को अच्छे तथा प्रमाणित बीजों की सप्लाई सुनिश्चित करने के वर्तमान प्रबन्ध पर्याप्त हैं;

(ख) इस सम्बन्ध में राजकीय बीज निगमों को क्या निदेश जारी किये गये हैं;

(ग) क्या प्रमाणित तथा घटिया किस्म के बीजों का उपयोग किये जाने के कारण फसलें नष्ट हो जाती हैं;

(घ) यदि हां, तो ऐसी स्थिति में बचने के लिए क्या उपाय सोचे गये हैं; और

(ङ) क्या सरकार को मालूम है कि बीजों के क्रय-विक्रय हेतु गैर सरकारी वाणिज्यिक कम्पनियों को राजकीय बीज निगमों द्वारा दी गई रियायत का पूरी तरह दुरुपयोग किया जा रहा है ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN) :

(a) In order to assess and meet the requirements of certified quality seeds for the farmers in the various agro-climatic regions advance planning of production and distribution of such seeds in consultation with the State Governments and other seed production/distribution agencies is regularly done before every crop season. This is followed by close liaison with the research, certification, multiplication and processing agencies. Continuous monitoring of the availability situation is conducted and all efforts are made to maintain adequate supply of quality/certified seeds.

(b) Distribution of seeds within the State is the function of the State Government. However, the Government of India remain in touch with the State Governments and State Seed Corporations continuously and issue guidelines from time to time to ensure adequate supply and to strengthen infrastructures required for seed production and distribution.

(c) Crop yield per hectare amongst other inputs depends on the quality of the seeds used. Poor and sub-standard seeds affect the productivity.

(d) Apart from enforcement of various legal and administrative measures to ensure distribution of quality seeds to the farmers, massive efforts are being made to increase the availability of breeder, foundation and certified seeds through the strengthening of the infrastructure of research, production and processing under the National Seeds Project.

(e) The Government is not aware of any concession being given by the State Seeds Corporations to the private commercial companies for the purchase and sale of seeds.

**श्री नरसिंह मकवाना :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार की लाख कोशिशों के बावजूद भी और इतना इन्तजाम होने के बाद भी किसानों को खराब किस्म का बीज मिलता है, जिससे उसकी सारी फसल