

(SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI) : (a) and (b) Representations are received from time to time from the trading community for repealing the Essential Commodities (Special Provision) Act, 1981. It is mainly urged that the Act of 1981 was promulgated when there was an acute shortage of foodgrains in the country. At present, there is no acute shortage of any of essential commodity in the country and there is no need for the Act.

(c) No State Government/U.T. Administration had opposed the extension of the Validity period or has sought repeal of the Act. There is no proposal for repeal, as the Act, is considered necessary to deter unscrupulous elements from indulging in malpractices or blackmarketing and thereby adversely affecting the interests of the consumers.

Amendment in Acts

269. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the review and possible amendment of the Dowry Prohibition Act and the Commission of Sati Prevention Act have been delayed because of differences between various concerned Ministries;

(b) if so, the date when the review was initiated;

(c) the time by which it is likely to be completed and the necessary amendments formulated for enactment;

(d) whether these Bills have been referred to the Law Commission or to any other statutory authority for examination; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT) (KUMARI VIMLA VERMA) : (a) to (c) The Department is reviewing the Dowry Prohibition Act and the Commission of Sati Prevention Act in consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments. Review of laws is a continuous process.

(d) to (e) Does not arise, since no such Bills have been prepared by Government.

Thottapally Fishing Harbour

270. SHRI THAYIL JOHN ANJALOSE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received the Second Phase Project Report of the Thottapally Fishing Harbour in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AYUB KHAN) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A project proposal for the development to stage-II fish

landing centre at Thottapally was received from the State Government in June, 1993. The proposal with an estimated cost of Rs. 98.00 lakhs is for construction of two breakwaters. On technical scrutiny of the project report, State Government have been requested to get the model studies conducted so as to ascertain the optimum length, alignment and corss-section of the proposed breakwaters and to ensure technical soundness of the proposal.

Revamped Public Distribution System

271. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have identified some shortcomings in the revamped Public Distribution System (PDS);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to remove those shortcomings in Public Distribution System to make it more effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM) (SHRI VENOD SHARMA) : (a) to (c) The Government had entrusted an evaluation of Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) to Programme Evaluation Organisation (PED) of the Planning Commission. The observations contained in the evaluation report has been circulated to all State Governments/UTs for taking further necessary action. These points are also being reviewed in the meetings with State Governments as action on these observations are to be taken by the State Governments. The strengthening and are to be taken by the State Governments. The strengthening and streamlining of PDS/RPDS is a continual process and efforts are made to tone up the functioning of the system. The coverage of RPDS has been increased from 1775 blocks to 2446 blocks recently to make available the benefits of the scheme to all families residing in blocks covered under Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). The major findings and suggestions made by the PED are as follows :

(i) The territorial area of Development Blocks and Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) were not identical in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. All villages were not covered under RPDS in some of the identified Blocks in Madhya Pradesh.

(ii) The doorsteps delivery was not in operation in any of the fair price shop in the selected Blocks failing in Bihar, Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal. It was partially introduced in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

(iii) Out of 64 selected villages, 25 villages were reported to be without fair price shops and selected households of 30 villages without ration cards. In some of the selected villages ration

- cards were either lost, destroyed, torn or became unusable but households were drawing ration.
- (iv) The storage facilities at Block level were found to be inadequate. The dependency on hired godowns was increasing instead of creating/constructing own godowns in government sector inspite of liberalising financial assistance by increasing subsidy component from 25% to 50%.
- (v) The vans used for doorstep delivery and Mobile Fair Price Shops were found to be inadequate. About 20% vans were not in functioning condition and required major repairs.
- (vi) Most of the Vigilance Committees were not functioning effectively for the purpose intended to.
- (vii) More than 60% of all commodities allotted were lifted, though allotment of commodities was not uniform or in proportion to the actual requirement of the States or the food habits of the people. The distribution of commodities covered under the Scheme was generally satisfactory.
- (viii) Prescribed norms for distribution of commodities were being generally followed by the FPS.
- (ix) The problems of fair price shops dealers were related to location of delivery centres, transportation of commodities fixation of margin money or commission, advance payment of cost of commodities and periodical delivery.
- (x) No payment of wages to the households worked under JRY/EAS was being made in kind through fair price shops in the selected States except Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. No linkage of RPDS was found with Nutrition Programme in any of the States.
- (xi) There was a mixed reaction of the selected households about the functioning of the fair price shops. Over 61% of the respondents reported positive about the regularity in opening of fair price shops, where as 30.28% reported negatively. Many of the respondents from the State of Bihar (75.29%), Karnataka (43.66%), Maharashtra (57.14%), Rajasthan (43.48%) and Tamil Nadu (100%) reported in negative about the opening of the fair price shops and scheduled working hours. However, to overcome the existing gaps in opening time, working hours, regularity of distribution and communication to the consumers, effective steps have to be undertaken. There are some indications about the sub-standard quality, quantity as well as higher prices of the commodities at the fair price shops. A close supervision and monitoring is required for the purpose.
- (xii) It was observed that commodities were generally distributed regularly but in some cases irregular distribution with long gap was reported.
- (xiii) In case of wheat (60%) and Kerosene (67%), the consumers felt the quantity distributed was adequate whereas in case of sugar (61%) and rice (55%), the quantity distributed was reported to be inadequate in many places. The quality of commodities distributed through RPDS was reported to be generally "average" for wheat (69.08%), rice (57%) and sugar (57%).
- (xiv) Majority of respondents felt that the commodities i.e., wheat (80.40%), rice (77.21%), sugar (89%) and kerosene (92.13%) as affordable.
- (xv) In some of the States, the beneficiaries have indicated their local needs and preferences for commodities which they would like to be distributed through RPDS. For example, in Rajasthan and Gujarat there are local demands for inclusion of maize, jowar and bajra, etc. in Kerala demand of rice was more in lieu of wheat. In West Bengal the distribution of local variety of rice was preferred. The study has indicated that there is a strong need to consider the local situation (socio-economic and cultural) regarding preference of commodities. Area specific approach need to be given due weightage in the scheme for addition and alteration of items under distribution.
- (xvi) According to the knowledgeable persons' the implementation of the RPDS was unsatisfactory due to irregular distribution of foodgrains, high transport cost and inadequate subsidy, non-lifting of commodities regularly and timely, underweighting of supply/distribution, replacement of good quality commodities at stock points/delivery centres, non adhering of quality and procedure in distribution and non-existence of Vigilance Committees.

Tribal Children

272. SHRI ANNA JOSHI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the approximate number of school going tribal children in the tribal and backward areas of Maharashtra State at present;

(b) whether most of these tribal children in the State are deprived of the right of getting education and opportunities of going to schools for getting elementary, primary education; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to ensure that all the tribal children in the State get education within the time-frame?

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION) (DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI) : (a) According to Selected Educational Statistics (1993-94) approximately 14.9 lakh tribal children were enrolled in all districts of Maharashtra.