

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2597
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2003
ABHIJIT SEN COMMITTEE REPORT
RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have studied the Abhijit Sengupta Committee report; and
- (b) if so, the action taken thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI S L MAHARIA)

(a): The Department has examined the major recommendations made by the High Level Committee on Long Term Grain Policy (HLC) constituted under the chairmanship of Prof. Abhijit Sen.

(b): The action taken with regard to the main recommendations of the HLC are as under:-

(i) The HLC has made several recommendations with regard to the fixation of the Minimum Support Prices of foodgrains. The Government has, however, decided that the present Minimum Support Price Regime should continue.

(ii) With regard to the recommendation of the HLC for introduction of a `universal Public Distribution System (PDS)` with uniform Central Issue Prices (CIPs), it is felt by the Government that the Targeted PDS was introduced in June, 1997 with a view to target the under privileged sections of society, as the earlier universal PDS did not adequately focus on the hungry and had an urban bias. Under the TPDS, the families Below the Poverty Line (BPL) have been identified and foodgrains are supplied to the BPL families at highly subsidized rates at less than 50% of the economic cost at the scale of 35 kg. per family per month. The introduction of a universal PDS will result in the PDS losing its focus on meeting the needs of the poor.

(iii) The HLC has recommended that for an effective foodgrains management system, it is necessary to liquidate the excess accumulation of stocks. To achieve this, several measures have been taken as a result of which stocks have reduced from 630 lakh tonnes as on 1st July 2002 to 352 lakh tonnes as on 1st July 2003.

(iv) The HLC also recommended disposal of old stocks and stock procured under relaxed quality stocks. As a result of measures taken for disposal of such stocks, over 80% of current stocks are less than 2 years old.

(v) As recommended by the HLC, the coverage of households has been increased by an additional 50 lakh persons with focus on the destitute population under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana.

(vi) The allocation under the Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) and Special Component of the SGRY scheme has been considerably enhanced as recommended by the HLC.

(vii) To improve functioning of the PDS, instructions have already been issued for strict implementation of PDS Control Order to ensure greater transparency in the working of the PDS and reduction in the diversion of foodgrains under the PDS. Guidelines have been issued for the involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of the TPDS.