

10

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND
PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(1997-98)

ELEVENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

[Action Taken Report on Sixth Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants (1997-98) of the erstwhile Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution]

TENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

November, 1997/Kartika, 1919 (Saka)

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, CIVIL
SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**
(1997-98)

(ELEVENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

*[Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations contained
in the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Civil
Supplies and Public Distribution on Demands for Grants
(1997-98) of the erstwhile Ministry of Civil Supplies,
Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution]*

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 2 December, 1997.
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 24 November, 1997.*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

November, 1997/Kartika, 1919 (Saka)

Price : Rs. 16.00

P.
C.
A. 98285 (12)
D. 16/1/98

LC
3283657R
17.10.11

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Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Eighth Edition) and Printed by Jainco Art India, 13/10, W.E.A., Saraswati Marg, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005.

CORRIGENDA TO THE TENTH REPORT (REFERENCE 10K SAPMAL OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC
DISTRIBUTION (1997-98))

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE	(iii)
INTRODUCTION	(v)
CHAPTER I Report	1
CHAPTER II Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government	5
CHAPTER III Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies	21
CHAPTER IV Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee	23
CHAPTER V Recommendation/Observation in respect of which final reply of the Government is still awaited	25

APPENDICES

I. Minutes of the sitting of the Standing Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution (1997-98) held on 10.11.1997 26

II. Analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations contained in the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution (Eleventh Lok Sabha) 28

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD,
CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(1997-98)

Shri R.L. Bhatia — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Shyam Bihari Misra
3. Shri R.C. Veerappa
4. Shri Gangaram Koli
5. Shri Rajkeshar Singh
6. Shri Nakli Singh
7. Shri Bachi Singh Rawat
8. Shri Chhatar Singh Darbar
9. Shri Manharan Lal Pandey
10. Shri Vidya Sagar Sonkar
11. Shri Chhitubhai D. Gamit
12. Shri Manikrao H. Gavit
13. Shri Nivritti Sheth Namdeo Sherkar
14. Smt. Chhabila Arvind Netam
15. Shri Madhaba Sardar
16. Shri Virendra Kumar Singh
17. Shri Pitambar Paswan
18. Shri Syed Masudal Hossain
19. Smt. Sandhya Bouri
20. Shri V. Kandasamy
21. Smt. Phoolan Devi
22. Shri D.S.A. Siva Prakasam

- *23. Shri Sebastian Paul
- 24. Shri Shivaji Kamblu
- 25. Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh
- 26. Shri Ghanshyam Chandra Kharwar
- 27. Shri Brahmanand Mandal
- 28. Shri Om Parkash Jindal
- 29. Shri Rajkumar Wangcha
- **30. Smt. Jayawanti Mehta

Rajya Sabha

- 31. Shri Onward L. Nongtdu
- 32. Shri Ghufran Azam
- 33. Shri Moolchand Meena
- 34. Shri Venod Sharma
- 35. Shri K.M. Khan
- 36. Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra
- 37. Shri Ram Ratan Ram
- 38. Shri Manohar Kant Dhyani
- 39. Shri Dawa Lama
- 40. Shri P. Soundararajan
- 41. Dr. Ramendra Kumar Yadav Ravi
- 42. Shri Joyanta Roy
- 43. Shri Tara Charan Majumdar

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri G.C. Malhotra	—	<i>Additional Secretary</i>
2. Shri M.R. Khosla	—	<i>Joint Secretary</i>
3. Shri Krishan Lal	—	<i>Deputy Secretary</i>
4. Shri A.S. Chera	—	<i>Under Secretary</i>
5. Shri O.P. Arora	—	<i>Assistant Director</i>
6. Smt. Manju Choudhary	—	<i>Committee Officer</i>

* Nominated to the Committee *w.e.f.* 8.8.1997.

** Nominated to the Committee *w.e.f.* 5.11.1997 *vice* Smt. T. Sharda *vide* Bulletin Part-II No. 1529 dt. 5.11.1997.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution (1997-98) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Tenth Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Sixth Report of the Committee (Eleventh Lok Sabha) on "Demands for Grants" 1997-98 of the erstwhile Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution.

2. The Sixth Report was presented to Lok Sabha/laid in Rajya Sabha on May 2, 1997. The Government furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in the Report on 10th and 19th September, 1997. The Draft Action Taken Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution (1997-98) at their sitting held on 10th November, 1997.

3. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on recommendations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee (Eleventh Lok Sabha) on "Demand for Grants" (1997-98) is given in Appendix II.

NEW DELHI;
18 November, 1997
27 Kartika, 1919 (Saka)

R.L. BHATIA,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Food,
Civil Supplies and Public Distribution.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Sixth Report (Eleventh Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (1997-98) relating to erstwhile Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution.

1.2 The Report was presented to Lok Sabha/laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on May 2, 1997. It contained 20 observations/recommendations.

1.3 Action Taken Notes in respect of all the 20 observations/recommendations contained in the Report have been received and categorised as follows:—

- (i) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government.

Para Nos. 2.4, 2.5, 2.26, 2.28, 2.38, 3.9, 3.15, 3.21, 3.22, 3.23, 3.27, 3.42, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8

(Chapter II, Total = 15)

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies.

Para Nos. 3.24, 3.30

(Chapter III, Total = 2)

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee.

Para Nos. 2.27, 2.29

(Chapter IV, Total = 2)

- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited.

Para Nos. 3.31

(Chapter V, Total = 1)

1.4 The Committee need hardly emphasise that utmost importance should be given to the implementation of recommendations accepted by the Government. In cases where it is not possible for the Government to implement the recommendations in their letter and spirit for any reason, the matter should be reported to the Committee in time with reasons for non-implementation.

1.5 The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of the recommendations:

(Regularisation of Trainees)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.27)

1.6 Realising the miserable condition of trainees due to non-regularisation at Amritsar and Calcutta unit of HVOC, the Committee had recommended:

“The Committee regret to note that people working in Vanaspati Units for the last 17 years have not been regularised by the HVOC so far. Earlier these people were getting Rs. 1500 stipend and now it has been increased to Rs. 2500. The Committee recommend that the Government should at least now regularise the workers of these two units located at Amritsar and Calcutta.”

1.7 The Government in their Action Taken reply have stated :

“At present 58 workers at HVOC Amritsar who were appointed as trainees on 8.9.1992, and 37 workers at HVOC, Calcutta, who were appointed as trainees on 1.9.1995, are functioning as trainees. Due to poor financial condition of HVOC, it has not been possible to appoint them in a regular capacity. The vanaspati production has come down to negligible levels and packing of edible oil is also not taking place now in the absence of Government imports of Palmolein for the PDS during the current year. The workers are being paid idle wages in these circumstances. Expenditure of about Rs. 10 crore would be involved if the trainees are regularised from the date of their appointment and an additional monthly expenditure of about Rs. 2.00 lakhs would have to be incurred if the trainees are given regular grades. HVOC does not have the funds at its disposal for this purpose. The stipend being paid to the trainees has, however, been increased from Rs. 1000 p.m. in 1992 to

Rs. 2500 p.m. in 1997. They are also getting benefits like ESI facility, HRA and uniforms at par with other workers. The regularisation of these trainees would be considered in the event of Amritsar and Kanpur units becoming viable after partial modernisation etc. in future."

1.8 The Committee are not satisfied with the reply of the Ministry. The future of at least 95 workers are at stake due to non-regularisation. They are leading miserable life and are always at tenterhooks. It is true that the vanaspati production has come down to negligible levels and the packing of edible oil is also stopped. Consequently, trainees are bearing the brunt of non-viability of the Corporation. Therefore, the Board of Directors and administration should strive all efforts to revive HVOC. They should manage the affairs of the Corporation in such a way that the services of the workers are properly utilised. They should ensure that the Corporation, too, must not suffer losses. As far as regularisation of trainees is concerned, the services of 3 groups have already been regularised after successful completion of training of one year. 95 workers (58 at Amritsar and 37 at Calcutta), have also successfully completed the training period of one year long back. They are at the mercy of the Corporation. The Committee, therefore, strongly reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire that utmost importance be given to the implementation of recommendation of the Committee and the workers of these two units at Amritsar and Calcutta be regularised without further delay.

(Vacation of land by Scooters India Ltd.)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.29)

1.9 Ascertaining the serious lapse/dereliction of duty on part of the Government regarding rent, loyalty and vacation of land from Scooters India Ltd., the Committee had recommended:

"The Committee are concerned to note that approximately 2 acres of land of HVOC was leased out to M/s Scooters India Ltd. (SIL) w.e.f. 1.2.1976 and the lease was further extended upto 2.5.1981 on the same terms and conditions without getting the earlier dues *i.e.* rent/royalty from SIL. This indicates that the Government has dealt with this serious matter lightly. The Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution had earlier issued a couple of reminders to

Ministry of Industry/Department of Heavy Industry since 1983. However, the matter has even not been taken with the Cabinet Secretary as admitted by the Secretary, Department of Civil Supplies during evidence. The Committee recommend that the matter should be placed immediately before the Cabinet Secretary and not only the amount of rent and royalty should be recovered but the land should also be got vacated from Scooters India Ltd. They also desire that the land vacated by Scooters India Limited should be sold so that the amount is utilised for modernisation of Vanaspati Units of HVOC."

1.10 The Ministry in their Action Taken reply have stated :

"The matter regarding the HVOC land leased out to M/s Scooters India Ltd. in 1976 is being resolved in discussion with the Department of Heavy Industry. The sale of this land is not being proposed for the revival plan of the Vanaspati Units of HVOC. The Board of Directors of HVOC, which is examining the revival plan, has alternate land under consideration for this purpose."

1.11 The Committee are very much perturbed over the unsatisfactory reply of the Ministry. It seems that Government, still, have not chalked out any plan to solve this problem and are beating about the bush. The Committee are also deeply concerned over the loss on the part of Government exchequer since 1981. No rent/royalty from SIL has yet been recovered. As recommended in Sixth Report, the matter was neither placed before Cabinet Secretary nor any effort has been made to get the land vacated from Scooters India Ltd. It is not clear as to why SIL is allowed to enjoy the benefit at the cost of HVOC. The Committee, therefore strongly reiterate their earlier recommendation and hope that this problem is solved without further delay.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Para No. 2.4 and 2.5)

2.4 The Committee have noted that a number of steps have been taken by the Government to control the price of essential commodities. The Committee have also observed that the supply management of 12 essential commodities has been carried out effectively during the current financial year 1996-97 as a result of which no perceptible rise in the prices of essential commodities was reported. The price of wheat has come under inflationary pressure due to fall in wheat production last year and consequent reduction in the procurement account. The Government had to import wheat upto 2 million tonnes to stabilise the price of wheat. The Committee are of the view that consumers had to pay Rs. 8 to 12 per 1 kg. of wheat in the month of October-November, 1996 and black marketeers, hoarders and profiteers were benefited.

2.5 The Committee are of the opinion that the Government was aware of the fall in production of wheat and consequent reduction in the procurement account. Such a mention could have been avoided if the Government had taken adequate measures in time. They therefore desire the Government to make all efforts to control the sudden exorbitant hike in price of essential commodities and take remedial and suitable actions in advance to save foreign currency.

Reply of the Government

One of the mandate of the Department of Food & Civil Supplies is to monitor the prices of foodgrains and take effective measures to contain abnormal rise in prices. Regular meetings were being taken by Secretary (Consumer Affairs) regarding monitoring of prices of foodgrains in the open market.

It has also been decided that Secretary (Food and Civil Supplies) will hold periodical meetings to monitor the prices of wheat and rice with a view to taking remedial measures in case there is an abnormal hike in prices of these items.

The Government is aware of the importance of adequate level of procurement of foodgrains to control open market prices and to make available sufficient foodgrains to PDS. Recognising this, efforts have been made in the Rabi Marketing Season 1997-98 to procure maximum quantity of wheat. A bonus of Rs. 60/- per quintal over and above MSP of Rs. 415/- per quintal has been allowed to the farmers from 17.3.97 to 30.6.97 in order to enthuse them to offer their produce to public procurement agencies. A quantity of 92.45 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured upto 4.7.97 against 81.76 lakh tonnes procured during the corresponding period in previous season. 118.34 lakh tonnes of rice has been procured for Central pool upto 30.6.97 in the current Khariff Marketing Season (1996-97) in comparison to 97.90 lakh tonnes procured during the corresponding period last year. With a view to preventing the hoarding of foodgrains, Government have also requested the State Governments/UTs to reimpose stock limits on foodgrains wherever such limits did not exist.

Controlling the prices of essential commodities within reasonable limits and to make them available easily in the open market throughout the year are the top priorities of the Government. Department of Consumer Affairs in the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs continue to monitor the wholesale and retail prices of 12 essential commodities *viz.*, rice, wheat, gram, tour, sugar, vanaspati, groundnut oil, mustard oil, salt, tea, potatoes and onions, on a daily, weekly and monthly basis in order to keep a close watch on the price movements and also to appraise the concerned ministries/Departments to take immediate necessary action. Prices are also being monitored regularly at higher levels by Committees such as Cabinet Committee on Prices (CCP) and Special Action Committee of Secretaries on Monitoring of Prices. In order to supplement the availability of essential commodities in open market, commodities which are in short supply such as wheat, pulses and edible oils are allowed to be imported under Open General Licence (OGL).

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-11027/8/97
P&C dated 19.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.26)

The Committee note that packaging units, have started making profits since 1994-95. The Government has assured assistance by giving higher allocation of imported palmolein for packaging in both small packs and bulk pack. The Committee recommend that

packaging of small packs of imported palmolein should be increased by these units keeping in mind the demand of common and poor consumers.

Reply of the Government

Imported edible oil is supplied to States/UTs under PDS in bulk, 15 kg tins and small packs as per requirement indicated by them. The entire packing work in respect of 15 kg tins is entrusted to the HVOC. In Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal the HVOC shares the small packing work with the State Agencies like Civil Supplies Corporation and Cooperatives. The HVOC does the entire small packing work for Delhi and Himachal Pradesh. In the case of small packs efforts are made by Government to ensure that the packing capacity with HVOC at its various units is utilised to the maximum possible extent by way of direct earmarking of quota to HVOC in the allocation orders. Import of 1.32 lakh MT of RBD Palmolein has been authorised for the PDS during August-November, 1997 out of which about 30,000 MT has been allocated to HVOC for packing in 15 kg tins and small packs keeping in view the demand received from various States/UTs.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. 14-3/97-Coord.
dated 19.9.97]

Recommendations (Para No. 2.28)

The Committee are surprised to note that approximately 64 acres of land was purchased by the erstwhile Ganesh Floor Mill Co. Ltd. at Sonepat. Out of this land approx. 31 acres was acquired by the Punjab Government in June, 1966 for public purpose namely for establishment of Hindu Kanya Vidyalaya and Hindu College (Girls), Sonepat; 20 acres of land has been acquired by Haryana Government for establishment of industrial estate; 6 acres has been acquired by the Municipal Corporation for construction of road. The Committee are dismayed to note the matter of land records with Distt. Revenue Authorities and enhancement of the compensation of land acquired by Hindu Kanya Vidyalaya has been dealt with in a casual manner by the HVOC. The Committee strongly recommend that the Government should take concrete steps immediately to get the land record verified from Distt. Revenue Authorities and action should be taken against the Vidyalaya/

College by filing a case in the court against them. The matter of compensation may also be dealt with expeditiously. The Committee also desire that action taken and progress made in this regard may also be communicated to them.

Reply of the Government

The erstwhile Ganesh Flour Mills Co. Ltd., had bought 64 acres of land at Sonepat in the year 1937. Out of 64 acres only about 11.20 acres of land now stands in the name of HVOC in the revenue records and the rest of the land has been acquired by the Haryana and Punjab Governments and other agencies. However, even out of the said 11.20 acres of land at Sonepat mutated in the name of HVOC, 6.73 acres of land had been encroached upon by various public agencies/private bodies much prior to the taking over the management of the Ganesh Flour Mills Co. Ltd. by Government. As a consequence only about 4.47 acres of land is now actually in the possession of HVOC. The details of acquisition/encroachment is as follows :

		(in acres)
Land purchased by erstwhile GFM Co. Ltd.		64.00
as per title deed dated 11.1.1937		
(1) Land acquired by Haryana Govt. for development of Industrial Area vide award No. 13 dated 7.5.1955		20.73
(2) Land acquired by Punjab Govt. for Hindu College (Girls) in June, 1966		30.79
(3) Land acquired by HUDA		1.22
(4) Land mutated in the name of HVOC (as per details given below)		11.24

Status of Land mutated in the name of HVOC Ltd.

(a) Land being used by Sonepat Municipality as path way/drainage since 1960	3.00
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(b)	Land encroached by Mauji Ram Jain Colony (16 local persons) since 1960's	1.50
(c)	Land encroached by Hindu College (Girls) since 1966	1.50
(d)	Land encroached by 6 local persons since 1960's	0.24
(e)	Land acquired by HUDA in 1992-93 but still in HVOC's name apart from (3) above	0.48
(f)	Land in possession of HVOC free from encroachment	4.47

As may be seen from above, most of the encroachments relate to a period prior to the nationalisation of GFM and setting up of HVOC. Action has been taken by HVOC to claim suitable compensation for the acquired land and eviction of illegal occupants from the encroached land at Sonepat as indicated below :

Higher Compensation from Court

- (i) Hon'ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana in its judgement (delivered in March, 1997) in RFA No. 568/78 has enhanced the rate of compensation from Rs. 2.37 per Sq. yard to Rs. 16.00 per Sq. yard in respect of land acquired by Punjab Government in June 1966, for establishment of Hindu Kanya Vidyalaya and Hindu College (Girls), Sonepat, HVOC has filed an appeal on 24th July, 1997 in the High Court of Punjab & Haryana for further enhancement of compensation.

Removal of Illegal Encroachments

- (ii) HVOC has at present 4.47 acres of land in its actual physical possession at Sonepat. This consists of 1.48 acres in Sikka colony, 0.46 acres near Hindu Kanya Mahavidayalya and 2.53 acres in the Industrial area in Kalupur Moja. There have been repeated attempts to encroach upon these three plots of land after the company was nationalised by

Government. However, HVOC has been able to successfully keep these free of encroachment as detailed below :

(A) Sikka Colony Land — 1.48 acres

This area was fully encroached upon by M/s. Sonepat Truck owners Union. In 1983 HVOC filed a Civil as well as a Criminal case against office bearers of M/s. Sonepat Truck Owners Union. In 1990, under a compromise formula filed before the Court, the land was vacated by the encroachers.

(B) Land adjacent to Hindu Kanya College — 0.46 acres

This consists of some quarters surrounded by walls. One Shri Ramdhhan had claimed to be in possession of these quarters for more than 40 years. He had also sublet these quarters to tenants. After determined efforts, these were got vacated in 1990 by the HVOC.

Again in 1993, one Shyam Pooja Sansthan encroached upon a portion of this land. This encroachment was removed with the help of District Administration. In 1996, Shyam Pooja Sansthan again tried to encroach upon the land by breaking the lock of a small room built on this land. The encroachment was removed immediately. However, two criminal cases and one civil case have been filed by the encroacher against the officials of HVOC after this incident and these are still pending before the Civil/Criminal courts in Sonepat.

(C) Land in Industrial Area — 2.5 acres

In 1995, M/s. Alfa Industries had encroached upon a portion of this land. HVOC with the help of District Administration got the land demarcated and M/s. Alfa Industries was persuaded to remove the encroachment and vacate the land.

As far as encroachments, done on the land belonging to erstwhile Ganesh Flour Mills, prior to the take over by Government are concerned, it may be stated that after these encroachments have come to the notice of the company, HVOC has been trying to take necessary steps to remove the encroachments. HVOC has been advised by the Government to take all necessary steps including filing complaints with the Police/Revenue Authorities, approaching the Court of Law for eviction of the encroachers, submission of legal claims for suitable damages/compensation etc. Officers of the HVOC had gone to Sonepat on 7.8.1997. Following this visit cases of eviction under the Public Premises Act have been filed in SDO (Civil) Court against several of the encroachers and notices have been issued to them to show cause

as to why they should not be evicted. With regard to the encroachments where revenue records were incomplete the SDO has ordered the concerned Tehsildar to give detailed report regarding the exact identity of the encroacher and the details of the encroachments so that further specific action can be taken in his court regarding the eviction of encroachers.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. 14-3/97-Coord. dated 19.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 2.38)

The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 came into force w.e.f. 1.9.1982 for dealing more effectively with persons indulging in hoarding and black-marketing and profiteering in essential commodities. This Act was initially effective for a period of five year and later extended upto 31.8.1997. The Committee desire the Government to extend this Act, for another five years i.e. upto 31.8.2002 so that strict action can be taken against black marketeers, hoarders and profiteers etc. by the State Governments/Union Territories.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Standing Committee has been noted in the Ministry and action is being taken in this direction.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-11027/8/97- P&C dated 19-9-97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.9)

The Committee are concerned to note the poor lifting of wheat and rice by the States/UTs. The Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution explained to the Committee during evidence that "in the cases of rice and wheat even last time from February to October, we asked them to lift but they did not lift" The Committee are of the view that the matter may be dealt with Chief Secretaries of these respective States/UTs for lifting the commodities under PDS regularly. The Committee also recommend that the meetings/conferences of the Chief Ministers/State Minister of Civil Supplies Department of the State/UTs may frequently be called to sort out the matter.

Reply of the Government

The allocation and lifting of rice and wheat from 1990-91 to 1996-97 may be seen in the table below :

Financial Year-wise Allocation and Lifting of Rice and Wheat

(in Lakh MTs)

Year	Rice		Wheat		Total	
	Allocation	Lifting	Allocation	Lifting	Allocation	Lifting
1990-91	93.00	75.60	92.83	69.24	186.71	144.84
1991-92	111.39	98.82	101.59	86.30	212.98	185.12
1992-93	112.45	91.67	90.37	72.28	202.82	163.95
1993-94	122.19	87.49	93.69	57.23	215.88	144.72
1994-95	131.15	78.85	106.14	46.90	237.29	125.75
1995-96	144.34	91.64	111.30	51.47	255.64	143.11
1996-97	149.44	110.21	105.20	83.90	254.64	194.11

It would be seen that compared to 125.75 LMT (52.99%) in 1994-95 and 143.11 LMT (55.98%) in 1995-96, the lifting increased to 194.11 LMT (76.23%) in 1996-97. The reason for improvement in offtake in 96-97 was the increase in difference between the open market prices and the Central Issue Prices (CIP).

The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been implemented with effect from 1.6.1997. Under TPDS the allocation to the States/UTs are based upon the average annual lifting for the last 10 years taking into account the requirement of families Below Poverty Line (BPL)@ 10 kg. per family per month. Since the allocations are now fixed on the past performance of lifting of the States, it is expected that the lifting of foodgrains would improve vis-a-vis allocations. The total allocation of subsidised foodgrains under TPDS is about 175 LMT out of which about 72 LMT is earmarked for BPL families for issue at specially subsidised prices and the remaining 103 LMT is earmarked for the APL families.

The issue of improvement in lifting the PDS commodities has been taken up at the level of the Chief Secretaries of the State/UTs. Senior officers of the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs are visiting selected major States to monitor the implementation of TPDS. The actual off-take against the TPDS allocation is also an item to be monitored during such visits.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M No. G-20017/15/97-AC dated 10-9-97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.15)

The Committee have observed that the Central Government has in an unprecedented decision announced an all time high bonus of Rs. 60 per quintal to the farmers on the existing minimum support of Rs. 415. The Punjab and Haryana Governments have rejected the Centre's bonus of Rs. 60 per quintal to the farmers for procurement of wheat by the Central Agencies. The Committee feel that it may cause immense hardship to the Centre in maintaining the National Buffer, as these two States contribute nearly 80 per cent of the national kitty. The Committee recommend that the Government should take concrete steps to make wheat available for distribution through Public Distribution System as well as through the open market. They also desire that work relating to streamlining the Public Distribution system with it focus on the poor should not be hampered due to rejection of the Centre's bonus to the farmers by these two States. They also desire that the Government should create a mechanism at the Centre to monitor all aspects regarding issue of ration cards to families below poverty line so that wheat and rice reach families below the poverty line at half of normal price. The Government should make all out efforts for success of the new PDS as well as the existing PDS. The Central Government is spending a lot of money for subsidising foodgrains and the Committee desire that the Central Government should impress upon the State Governments/UT Administrations to monitor PDS at States and District level so that 10 kg. rice/wheat must reach the genuine families below the poverty line.

Reply of the Government

Guidelines have been issued to States/UTs for implementation of TPDS which include identification of population below poverty line. Issue of special cards to identified BPL families, make foolproof

arrangements for delivery of foodgrains to Fair Price Shops (FPS) and for its distribution in a transparent and accountable manner at FPS level. Panchayats and Nagarpalikas are given responsibility for supervising and overseeing the work. Instructions have also been issued to constitute Vigilance Committees at Taluk and District levels as well as at State level. This will be supplemental to administrative reviews done at various levels. These proforma has been modified in a manner so as to give information about ration cards and issue of foodgrains from FPS to BPL and APL families separately. Government is very keen that foodgrains issued at specially subsidised rates to reach the population and are into delivered to the open market. State Governments have been asked to draw up inspections schedules for Districts/Taluka level officers right from the Collector/District Magistrate to the Inspector of Supplies. The Collector should hold weekly meetings on PDS at the District level. At the State level Secretary in-charge of PDS should have similar review meetings at least once in every month.

By pursuing a policy of price support, the farmers of the country are encouraged to produce more foodgrains. In order to compensate for the high open market prices of wheat and also to encourage the farmers to contribute more wheat to the Central Pool, the Government granted a Central bonus of Rs. 60/- per quintal over and above the MSP of Rs. 415/- per quintal for wheat sold to the Government procuring agencies during 1997-98 Rabi Marketing Season. The farmers community reciprocated in good measures by offering their produce to public procurement agencies in the larger interest of the nation. A quantity of 92.78 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured during the current Rabi Marketing Season 1997-98 (upto 11.8.1997) as against 81.80 lakh tonnes of wheat procured during the corresponding period in the last season. Therefore, inspite of initial protests by Haryana and Haryana State Governments, they have ultimately co-operated actively with the Central Government in procuring a larger quantity of wheat during the current year. There is enough wheat in the Central Pool to look after the requirements of the Public Distribution System and other Welfare Schemes of the concerned Ministries of the Central Government.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-20017/15/97-
AC dated 10-9-97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.21)

The Committee note that the Government provided funds for the purchase of mobile vans/trucks for distribution of essential commodities in Rural/Hilly remote and other disadvantaged areas where static/regular fair price shops are not found viable and feasible. The assistance is provided in the form of loan/subsidy in the ratio of 50 : 50 and is restricted to R. 4 lakhs in case of delivery vans (for 4 Lonner) and Rs. 8 lakhs for big trucks ranging from 8 to 10 tonne and above subject to a ceiling or actual cost whichever is less. The Committee further note from the statements furnished by the Ministry that budget provision for assistance for purchase of vans has been the same as in the earlier year, *i.e.* Rs. 6.60 crores from 1994-95 to 1996-97. The Committee therefore recommended that budget provision may be increased reasonably keeping in view the increase in the cost of vans/trucks. They also desire the Government to consider the revision of the ceiling, which is at present Rs. 4 lakhs for vans and Rs. 8 lakhs for Trucks.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee was communicated to the Planning Commission which had agreed to provide more funds under Centrally sponsored schemes for construction of godowns and purchase of vans/trucks. During the year 1997-98 a sum of Rs. 12.50 crores and 10.00 crores have been provided for constructions of godowns and purchase of vans/trucks respectively as against the 1996-97 budget provision of Rs. 7.55 crores and 6.60 crores respectively. The issue of revision of ceiling of Rs. 4 lakhs for vans and Rs. 8 lakhs for trucks is under consideration.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-20017/15/97-AC dated 10.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.22)

The Committee are happy to note that scheme for construction of godowns has been liberalised and extended to all areas covered under the revamped PDS also with modified pattern of assistance in the form of subsidy and loans in the ratio of 50 : 50. The Committee appreciate that financial assistance to the extent of Rs. 32.45 crores has been sanctioned for construction of 396 godowns for raising additional storage capacity of 1,57,022 MT in 24 States/UTs. The Committee consider that storage capacity is still not adequate and States/UTs are

not able to lift the foodgrain allotted to them on cent per cent basis. There is need to increase the storage capacity further for maintaining adequate stock to ensure regular supplies under the PDS. They therefore desire the Government to provide adequate funds during the Ninth Five Year Plan for construction of godowns in States/UTs.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Committee was communicated to the Planning Commission. Planning Commission have raised the Plan outlay for 1997-98 to Rs. 12.50 crores as against Rs. 7.55 crores in 1996-97. The Planning Commission has also been impressed upon to provide adequate funds during the 9th Five Year Plan for construction of godowns. The suggestions of the Committee have been noted for reference and records.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-20017/15/97-
AC dated 10.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.23)

The Committee also urge the Government to stress upon those States who have not furnished utilisation certificates for which the funds were utilised so that allocation problem is sorted out as admitted by the Secretary, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution during evidence.

Reply of the Government

The suggestions of the Committee have been noted. All States/UTs have been requested to furnish utilisation certificates (UC) within the stipulated time. Reminders were issued at various levels to States/UTs. As a result, UCs have started coming in. State Government are being impressed upon to submit the utilisation certificates in time.

The proposals received by the States/UTs are placed before the Standing Finance Committee (SFC) for consideration. It has now been decided that the Secretary (Food and Civil Supplies) of the State Governments whose proposals are to be considered shall be required to participate in the meetings of the SFC for on the spot settlement of outstanding issues including utilisation of past assistance so that the proposals are cleared expeditiously.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-20017/15/97-
AC dated 10.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.27)

The Committee note that a scheme relating the intelligence, Enforcement, Manpower Training was initiated for improving the management of supplies of essential commodities under PDS. The Committee therefore recommended that adequate funds should be made available for the scheme.

Reply of the Government

The observations of the Committee have been noted for reference and record. The budget provision for the scheme of intelligence, Enforcement and Manpower Training on PDS has been raised from Rs. 20 lakhs during 1996-97 to Rs. 50 lakhs during 1997-98.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-20017/15/97-AC dated 10.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.42)

The Committee note that imported edible oil is imported by State Trading Corporation (STC). The imported edible oil is distributed at a subsidised rate to States/UTs and they in turn distribute it through dealers further to consumers. Loss on imported edible oil is reimbursed to the State Trading Corporation by the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution. The Committee would like the Government to consider the possibility for distribution of edible oils under Public Distribution System through Fair Price Shops. The Committee also recommend that the Government should take all necessary steps to make the edible oils available to meet the demands during festivals to the needy and poor families at reasonable rate.

Reply of the Government

The STC has been authorised to import 1.32 lakh MTs of RBD Palmolein for supply to States/UTs under PDS during August-November, 1997 to meet the enhanced demand during the festival season. Allocations have been issued to the States/UTs from whom requirement for the said period was received.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. 14-3/97-Coord. dated 19.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 4.6)

The Committee are concerned to note from the statement furnished by the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution that provision for RE for the year 1996-97 have been made at Rs. 44.22 crores for Plan Expenditure and at Rs. 59.69 crores for Non-Plan Expenditure. Only Rs. 9.15 crores have been spent under Plan Schemes and Rs. 4.36 crores under Non-Plan Schemes (upto Dec. 96). Though only three months were left, there was a huge gap between the revised estimates and actual expenditure. The Committee fails to understand the rationale behind this especially when the PDS is to be streamlined and monitoring of prices and availability of essential commodities is to be given much needed emphasis. The Committee are of the view that at least 50% of the outlays for the year 1996-97 should have been spent by the end of December, 1996. The Committee recommend the Government to utilise the fund fully and not divert it to any other schemes/programmes.

Reply of the Government

In the erstwhile Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution there has been no diversion of funds to other Schemes/Programmes. Regarding uneven phasing of Budget the Administrative Divisions are being advised from time to time to utilise the budgetary provisions evenly throughout the year. The monitoring of expenditure has been further tightened now.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-11027/8/97-
P&C dated 19.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 4.7)

The Committee are also concerned to note that Non-Plan Expenditure for the year 1997-98 is Rs. 56.31 crores which is almost double of the Plan Expenditure. The Committee would like to recommend that Non-Plan Expenditure must be curtailed to a reasonable level.

Reply of the Government

In BE 1997-98 Rs. 28.70 crores has been provided for Plan schemes/programmes as compared to Non-Plan budget of Rs. 56.31 crores. This is due to the fact that Non-Plan budget contains the subsidy on edible oil in the form of reimbursement of losses to State Trading Corporation

on its trading on edible oil account amounting to Rs. 50 crores. As such, for the rest of the Non-Plan expenditure of the Ministry the budget is only Rs. 6.31 crores which is at a reasonable level compared to Plan budget Rs. 28.70 crores.

However, as per the suggestion of the Committee utmost economy is observed in Non-Plan expenditure.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-11027/8/97-
P&C dated 19.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 4.8)

The Committee note that savings in the grants or appropriation indicate that expenditure could not be incurred from 1993-94 to 1995-96 as estimated and planned. Large scale savings is indicative of poor budgeting. The Committee are not convinced with the reasons for the savings explained by the Ministry. They are of the view that Government should prepare/place the Grant/Appropriation considering the expenditure incurred during the previous year so that large scale savings could be avoided. They also desire that Grants/Appropriations should be fully utilised and may be spent evenly in the year.

Reply of the Government

The savings from 1993-94 to 1995-96 were mainly due to the following two reasons :

1. Non utilisation of funds provided under Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF) which is a special fund financed by Deptt. of Revenue and set off in the Grant by deduct recoveries of matching amount.
2. Non utilisation of National Renewal Fund Grant by Hindustan Vegetable Oil Corporation for implementation of voluntary retirement scheme.

Regarding 1. above w.e.f. 1996-97 revised estimates, the provisions were drastically reduced from Rs. 10 crores to Rs. 3.50 crores and for 1997-98 the provisions are kept at Rs. 5 crores. This was done keeping in view the slow utilisation of CWF Grants.

Regarding 2. above similar steps have been taken in 1997-98. No amount was provided in BE and an amount of Rs. 50 lakhs only has so far been provided by way of 1st supplementary. In

contrast to it in 1996-97 an amount of Rs. 1 crore was provided for BE and an additional amount of Rs. 1.30 crores was provided in supplementary demand for grants aggregating the total to Rs. 2.30 crores for 1996-97.

Above two steps will avoid large scale savings at the end of the financial year as had happened during the year 1993-94 to 1995-96. However, the suggestions of the Committee to prepare/place the Grant/ Appropriation considering the expenditure incurred during the previous year will be kept in view from the current financial year.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-11027/8/97-
P&C dated 19.9.97]

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE I VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

Recommendation (Para No. 3.24)

The Committee desire the Government to take up the matter with remaining States/UTs who have not reported the setting up of Vigilance Committee comprising of local people at Fair Price Shops and other level. The Committee also urge the Government to stress upon the States/UTs that Vigilance Committees should function effectively for the purpose intended for. The Committee would like the Government to apprise of the action taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The observations of the Committee have been noted. Under TPDS suitable guidelines have been issued to State Government/UTs for setting up of Vigilance Committees and report about their functioning. The Vigilance Committees are set up at Fair Price Shop, Taluk, District and State levels. At Fair Price Shop level the Committee can include a few card holders attached to the shop (some of whom should be women) elected President of the Panchayat or Municipal Councillor, consumer activists and other social workers of repute. Taluk level Committees with Taluk Supply Officer as convenor and District level Committees with District Supply Officer as convenor can also be formed. Senior level officers have been deputed to ascertain the ground reality on the subject and to impress upon the States the importance and urgency to do so.

2. Recently instructions have been issued to all States/UTs to include Members of Parliament or their representatives in the Vigilance Committees at various levels in order to make the functioning of these Committees more the transparent and accountable.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. 20017/15/97-AC
dated 10.9.97]

Recommendation (Para No. 3.30)

The Committee note that there are 32 State Commissions, one in each State/UT, and 518 District Fora are functioning in 513 districts in the Country at present. However District Fora have not been set up in newly formed districts and one district each in Haryana and Tripura and 6 districts in Tamil Nadu. According to the provisions of the consumer Protection Act, 1986, the responsibility for setting up of District Forum rests with the respective State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Committee desire the Central Government to stress upon Haryana, Tripura and Tamil Nadu Governments to set up fora in the remaining/New Districts without delay.

Reply of the Government

The Central Government has advised the State Governments of Haryana, Tripura and Tamil Nadu to set up District Fora in the newly created districts immediately.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-11027/8/97-
P&C dated 19.9.97]

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Para No. 2.27)

The Committee regret to note that people working in Vanaspati Units for the last 17 years, have not been regularised by the HVOC so far. Earlier these people were getting Rs. 1500 stipend and now it has been increased to Rs. 2500. The Committee recommend that the Government should at least now regularise the workers of these two units located at Amritsar and Calcutta.

Reply of the Government

At present 58 workers at HVOC Amritsar who were appointed as trainees on 8.9.1992, and 37 workers at HVOC Calcutta, who were appointed as trainees on 1.9.1995, are functioning as trainees. Due to poor financial condition of HVOC, it has not been possible to appoint them in a regular capacity. The vanaspati production has come down to negligible levels and packing of edible oil is also not taking place now in the absence of Government imports of palmolein for the PDS during the current year. The workers are being paid idle wages in these circumstances. Expenditure of about Rs. 1.00 crore would be involved if the trainees are regularised from the date of their appointment and an additional monthly expenditure of about Rs. 2.00 lakhs would have to be incurred if the trainees are given regular grades. HVOC does not have the funds at its disposal for this purpose. The stipend being paid to the trainees has however, been increased from Rs. 1000 p.m. in 1992 to Rs. 2500 p.m. in 1997. They are also getting benefits like ESI facility, HRA and uniforms at par with other workers. The regularisation of these trainees would be considered in the event of Amritsar and Kanpur units becoming viable after partial modernisation etc. in future.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. 14-3/97-Coord
dated 19.9.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* para No. 1.8 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Para No. 2.29)

The Committee are concerned to note that approximately 2 acres of land of HVOC was leased out to M/s Scooters India Ltd. (SIL) w.e.f. 1.2.1976 and the lease was further extended upto 2.5.1981 on the same terms and conditions without getting the earlier dues *i.e.* rent/ royalty from SIL. This indicates that the Government has dealt with this serious matter lightly. The Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution had earlier issued a couple of reminders to Ministry of Industry/Department of Heavy Industry since 1983. However the matter has even not been taken with the Cabinet Secretary as admitted by the Secretary, Department of Civil Supplies during evidence. The Committee recommend that the matter should be placed immediately before the Cabinet Secretary and not only the amount of rent and royalty should be recovered but the land should also be got vacated from Scooters India Ltd. They also desire that the land vacated by Scooter India Limited should be sold so that the amount is utilised for modernisation of Vanaspati Units of HVOC.

Reply of the Government

The matter regarding the HVOC land leased out to M/s Scooters India Ltd. in 1976 is being resolved in discussion with the Department of Heavy Industry. The sale of this land is not being proposed for the revival plan of the Vanaspati Units of HVOC. The Board of Directors of HVOC, which is examining the revival plan, has alternate land under consideration for this purpose.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. 14-3/97-Coord dated 19.9.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Para No. 111 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATION/OBSERVATION IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLY OF GOVERNMENT IS STILL AWAITED

Recommendation (Para No. 3.31)

The Committee further note that on the recommendations of the Central Consumer Protection Council, Central Government constituted a Working Group to suggest suitable amendments to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the Rules framed thereunder to make it more effective and purposeful. The working group has submitted its report which contains several recommendations. As the recommendations pertained to various Ministries/Departments, the comments/suggestions have been obtained from them and the same are being considered to the Ministry so as to finalise the proposals for amending the Act. The Committee recommend that the Government should finalise the proposals as early as possible and make amendments in the Consumer Protection Act., 1986 accordingly. The Committee would also like to apprised of the reports made by the Working Group as well as comments/suggestions made by the Ministries/Departments and amendments made in the Act.

Reply of the Government

Recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance.

[Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs O.M. No. G-11027/8/97-
P&C dated 19.9.97]

NEW DELHI;
18 November, 1997
27 Kartika, 1919 (Saka)

R.L. BHATIA,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Food,
Civil Supplies and Public Distribution.

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10TH NOVEMBER, 1997

The Committee sat from 15.00 hrs. to 16.30 hr. on 10th November, 1997.

PRESENT

Shri R.L. Bhatia — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Gangaram Koli
3. Shri Rajkeshar Singh
4. Shri Bachi Singh Rawat
5. Shri Chhatar Singh Darbar
6. Shri Manharan Lal Pandey
7. Shri Vidya Sagar Sonkar
8. Shri Manikrao H. Gavit
9. Smt. Chhabila Arvind Netam
10. Shri Virendra Kumar Singh
11. Shri Pitambar Paswan
12. Smt. Sandhya Bouri
13. Shri V. Kandasamy
14. Smt. Phoolan Devi
15. Shri D.S.A. Siva Prakasam
16. Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh
17. Shri Brahmanand Mandal
18. Shri Sebastian Paul

Rajya Sabha

19. Shri K.M. Khan
20. Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra
21. Shri Ram Ratan Ram
22. Shri Dawa Lama
23. Shri Tara Charan Majumdar

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri G.C. Malhotra	—	<i>Additional Secretary</i>
2. Shri M.R. Khosla	—	<i>Joint Secretary</i>
3. Shri Krishan Lal	—	<i>Deputy Secretary</i>
4. Shri A.S. Chera	—	<i>Under Secretary</i>
5. Shri O.P. Arora	—	<i>Assistant Director</i>

I. Consideration and adoption of Draft Ninth Report

2. *** *** ***

II. Consideration and adoption of Draft Tenth Report

3. The Committee also considered the draft Tenth Report on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Sixth Report on Demands for Grants (1997-98) relating to erstwhile Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution and adopted.

4. The Committee then authorised the Chairman to finalise the above mentioned Reports and present/lay the same in both the Houses of Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

*** Not related to this Report.

APPENDIX II

(*Vide* Introduction of the Report)

Analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Sixth Report of Standing Committee on Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution (Eleventh Lok Sabha)

(i)	Total Number of Recommendations	20
(ii)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government Para Nos. 2.4, 2.5, 2.26, 2.28, 2.38, 3.9, 3.15, 3.21, 3.22, 3.23, 3.27, 3.42, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8	
	Total	15
	Percentage	75%
(iii)	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply Para Nos. 3.24., 3.30	
	Total	2
	Percentage	10%
(iv)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee Para Nos. 2.27, 2.29	
	Total	2
	Percentage	10%
(v)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final reply of the Government is still awaited Para No. 3.31	
	Total	1
	Percentage	5%