

# RISING PRICES

## OR

# PRICE HIKE

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Prices are ever on the increase. A rise in prices, economists say, is a sign of development and prosperity. But during the last two decades, prices of almost all the essential commodities have been increasing at an alarming rate. These soaring prices have caused great unrest and frustration among the people. The people belonging to the middle class and the salaried people are hit hard. All the more, the soaring prices have become a big threat and an open challenge to the government. It has shaken the faith of the people in the government. There is no let-up in the situation. Life has become very hard.

Not to speak of rising prices, things of daily use are sometimes not available in the market. Big businessmen hoard things and sell these in black. Adulteration of eatables is a big health hazard. Sometimes, there is no sugar, no kerosene oil, no cooking gas, nothing. The prices of petrol, cooking gas, kerosene oil and several other items of daily use are increasing every year. Not only that, the railway fares, air fares and bus and taxi charges are also increasing regularly. The rich make a display of their wealth while the poor find it difficult to make both their ends meet. Life has lost its charm for the average bread-winner. The indiscriminate rise in prices of essential commodities has left many a people tense and helpless. No one can foresee what is in store for the common people.

There are many causes of the unprecedented rise in prices. Inflation, black marketing, hoarding, faulty credit system, over population and improper system of distribution are some of the major causes of hike in prices. The standard of living of the people has improved. People need more things than they needed earlier. The increasing demand leads to hike in prices. Sometimes, natural factors like flood and drought also contribute to rise in prices. Much food is being wasted in the parties and marriages. Production of food is not in proportion with the increase in population. Social evils also tax the common people badly. With the breaking of joint-family system, the cost of living has gone up. The purchasing power of the rupee is continuously falling.

It is now being increasingly felt that large scale corruption by some political leaders in power and some senior officers in the government is also the cause of constant rise in prices. In the recent past, several scams have come to

light that involve big amount said to have ben pocketed by the big-wigs of the country without any shame or remorse. Several cases are pending in the courts. It is, however, feared that influential and moneyed people have the power to so circumvent the legal process in their favour that they go scot free. These huge amounts of black money produce a very bad effect on the economy of the country and lead to a rise in prices.

It is the duty of the government to bring down the prices of the essential commodities at least. Price line is the life line of a nation. Black-market, hoarders and profiteers must be brought to book. Family Planning programme should be stepped up to check over-population. More fair-price shop should be opened in different localities. There should be an equitable distribution through the fair price shops. Shopkeepers should be directed to display the stock of essential commodities along with their prices. Those people who buy things in the black market should be punished. Production of food should be increased. Sincere efforts should be made to stabilize prices of essential commodities. Evils of corruption, bribery, smuggling and illegal gratification deep-rooted in the society must be rooted out.

Let us hope that the government will be able to bring down the soaring prices. What is needed is the right intention and the force of will. The government has, in recent past, taken some steps to control the prices and revamp the economy of the country. The government efforts have met a partial success and inflation has been controlled to some extent.