

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) The Super Bazar is an autonomous organization having its own Board of Directors to take decisions on their day to day administrative and business matters and the Government of India do not interfere in such matters. The Super Bazar has, however, informed that due to ongoing financial crisis, it has not been able to make timely payment for the outstanding dues to the suppliers as a result of which, it has not been able to make full supplies to its medicine outlets. However, the supply of life saving drugs is being maintained by the Super Bazar. The Super Bazar has further informed that it proposes to get loan from financial institutions to overcome the financial crisis which would enable it to make timely payment to the suppliers and ensure maximum availability of medicines.

Exclusion of Sugar from ration shops

†412. SHRI JANESHWAR MISRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are excluding sugar from the commodities being supplied through ration shops;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what would be its impact on the weaker sections of society?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SREENIVASA PRASAD) (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Shiphonning off of foodgrains and sugar from PDS

413. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a recent survey conducted by the Tata Economic Consultancy Service has revealed that a chunk of foodgrains and sugar quota released for distribution through P.D.S. is shiphoned off and diverted for sale in the open market;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN):

(a) Yes, Sir. The study conducted by Tata Economic Consultancy Service (TECS) in the year 1997 has estimated the diversion of four commodities viz. wheat, rice, sugar and edible oil from the Public Distribution System.

†Original notice of the Question received in Hindi.

(b) At the national level, the diversion of commodities is estimated to the extent of 36% in wheat-31% in rice and 23% in sugar.

(c) Public Distribution System is implemented under the joint responsibility of the Central and State Governments/UT Administrations. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and transportation of the PDS commodities up to the Central godowns and making them available to the States. The responsibility for distribution to the consumers through the Fair Price Shops and administration of the PDS rests with the State Governments and UT Administrations. The findings of the TECS Report were discussed in the Meeting of the State Food Secretaries' held on 10.8.98. The TECS report was forwarded to the States/UTs for appropriate action so as to eliminate/minimise diversion. The State Governments have been requested to closely monitor the PDS at the Fair Price Shop and other levels and to make distribution of PDS commodities in a transparent and accountable manner by involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutes (PRIs) and activating Vigilance Committees etc. in implementation of PDS.

Import of Sugar

‡414. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that private sector had been allowed to import sugar in country;

(b) if so, how much sugar was imported in the country during the 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(c) what is the quantity of sugar imported by private sector and Government sector, separately; and

(d) the reasons for giving a free hand to import sugar inspite of its substantial availability in the country during this period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Sugar was placed under Open General Licence (OGL) in March 1994. Since then, it has continued to be on OGL. However, imports of sugar have been subject to registration of import contracts with Agircultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) with effect from 15th September, 1997.

(b) During the financial year 1997-98 and 1998-99, imports of sugar are estimated at 3,46,905 and 8,57,691 tonnes respectively, as per statistical data of Director General of Commercial Intelligence & Services, Calcutta.

‡Original notice of the Question received in Hindi.