

during the last 3 years in the country is as follows :

Area = '000 Hectares, Production = '000 Tonnes, Yield = Kgs/ha.

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Area	24662	22543	23743
Production	14265	12015	13599
Yield	578	533	573

(b) and (c) The per capita net availability of pulses has gone down from 60.7 gms/day in 1951 to 36.6 gms/day (provisional) in 1993.

(d) The quantity and value of pulses imported during the last three years is as under :

Year	Quantity	Value
1990-91	1273433	481.17
1991-92	310604	254.24
1992-93	578799	325.98

(e) and (f) The major constraints in pulses' production are; cultivation on marginal and sub-marginal lands, dependence on rains, lack of application of production inputs, lack of genetic breakthrough and susceptibility to pests and diseases. In order to raise production of pulses to meet the domestic demand the centrally Sponsored National Pulses Development Project is under implementation in 24 States and Union Territories of Delhi and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in selected districts in major pulses producing States and in entire States in the minor pulses producing States.

Hike in prices of Essential Commodities

4077. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1596 given in the Rajya Sabha on 4th March, 1994 and state :

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of essential commodities in the country have increased by 30% to 70% since June, 1991; and

(b) whether Government propose to provide any relief to common man against the hike in price; and if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP

NATH RAI) (a) The percentage variations in indices of whole-sale prices of rice, wheat, pulses, sugar and edible oils as on 2-4-1994 compared with that on 1-6-1991 are as under :—

Item	2-4-1994 1-6-1991
Rice	+38.6
Wheat	+63.6
Pulses	+34.24
Sugar	+55.8
Edible Oils	—5.5

(b) In order to keep the open market prices of wheat and rice at reasonable level the Food Corporation of India have undertaken open sale of wheat and rice from the Central Pool. This has had a sobering effect on the open market prices of these commodities. To improve the availability of sugar in the open market and to maintain prices of sugar at reasonable level, the Government has permitted import of sugar under O.G.L.

The Government has been monitoring the prices and availability of essential commodities of mass consumption on regular basis. An Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution reviews the prices, availability, shortage etc., if any, of the 12 selected essential commodities on a regular basis.

Letters written by Members of Parliament

4078. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) the number of letters written by the Members of Parliament to the Ministry during the period from 1st April, 1990 to 31st March, 1993 along-with year-wise details thereof;

(b) what is the number of letters acknowledged out of them;

(c) what is the number of letters in respect of which final replies were sent; and

(d) what is the break-up of final letters issued by the Ministry containing positive and negative replies respectively ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI) : (a) to (c) The year-wise information in respect of letters received from Members of Parliament, the number of those letters that were acknowledged

and the number in respect of which final replies were sent, is as follows :

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
No. of letters received	410	353	489
No. of letters acknowledged	360	314	456
No. of letters finally replied to :	367	333	458

(d) Each reference received from the Member of Parliament is replied to, keeping in view the policies of the Government, merit of the case and other relevant factors.

Discriminative Price Fixation Policy of Wheat by Food Corporation of India

4079. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Flour Mill Owners Association of Vidarbha region in Maharashtra have represented against the discriminative price fixation policy of wheat which is supplied by Food Corporation of India godowns ;

(b) whether it is a fact that price difference between Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh is discriminative in spite of the fact that they are equidistant from Maharashtra ;

(c) whether it is also a fact that due to a difference of Rs. 45 per Quintal in the prices between Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the finished product is dumped in the Vidarbha markets by Flour Mill Owners of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh at a price which is lower than the price of raw material available to the Mill Owners of Maharashtra ;

(d) whether because of this Flour Mills in Maharashtra, particularly Vidarbha have closed down, leading to a large scale unemployment ; and

(e) if so, what is being done to ameliorate this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP-NATH RAI) : (a) Yes, Sir. Vidharbha Roller Flour Millers Association has represented for reduction of price especially for Vidharbha Region at par with Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

(b) The price for sale in open market is fixed by the Food Corporation of India on month to month basis for various States keeping in view the Minimum Support Price, transportation lead from procurement States, availability of surplus stocks and other operational factors.

(c) The Roller Flour Mills are free to purchase wheat from the neighbouring States if it is economically viable to them. Similarly, Roller Flour Mills are free to sell their finished product anywhere in the country.

(d) As per the information available with the Ministry of Roller Flour Mill in Maharashtra has closed down leading to the large scale unemployment.

(e) Does not arise.

Increase in the Prices of Pulses

4080. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH :
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR
MALHOTRA :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a sudden spurt in the prices of pulses in the domestic market ;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor ;

(c) what is the present supply position and what is the gap between the demand and supply ;

(d) what steps Government have taken to curb the increase in Prices of Pulses ;

(e) whether it is a fact that exporters are importing cheap and inferior quality of Pulses for domestic use and are exporting superior quality of Pulses from India ;

(f) if so, what are the details of import and export of Pulses during each of the last three years ; and

(g) what is the per capita production and consumption of Pulses in India, China, Russia and USA ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP-NATH RAI) : (a) Yes, Sir. There has been some seasonal increase in the prices of pulses in the domestic market.

(b) The increase in the prices of pulses is mainly due to the fact that domestic production has not kept pace with the domestic demand.

(c) The production of pulses during the crop year (July-June) 1993-94 is estimated at 14.84 million Metric Tonnes as against the requirement of about 16-17 million Metric Tonnes.

(d) The centrally-sponsored National Pulses Development Project (NPDP) is under implementation in the country to provide an impetus to pulses production in the country. Besides, import of pulses is freely allowed.