(c) and (d) National Medicinal Plants Board has been implementing a Central Sector Scheme for development and cultivation of medicinal plants since the year 2000-01. This scheme was revised and renamed as "Central Sector Scheme for Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants" in the year 2008-09 and the revised scheme is being implemented. Under these schemes, assistance have been given to establish 168 herbal gardens and 1303 school herbal gardens in different parts of the country. Further, 34 Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas covering 4355 hectares are being established in different states under the scheme. Moreover, 87 Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas have been established by Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), Bangalore, in nine states. Department of Biotechnology has also facilitated setting up of four Gene Banks at Central Institute of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Lucknow, National Bureau of Plants Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi, Tropical Botanic Garden & Research Institute (TBGRI), Thiruvananthapuram and Regional Research Laboratory (RRL), Jammu. A germplasm repository for medicinal plants used in Ayurveda was also supported at Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal. More than 5,000 accessions of important medicinal & aromatic plants species are being maintained as live material in field gene banks, in the form of seed, in vitro material and DNA. For long-term conservation, the accessions are stored under cryogenic conditions. Many threatened species are also conserved in Botanical Gardens.

In addition to above, a new "Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Mission on Medicinal Plants" with a total outlay of Rs. 630 crores is being implemented since 2008-09 by the National Medicinal Plants Board. 25 States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal have been assisted for establishing medicinal plants nurseries, cultivation etc.

Promotion of Ethanol for blending with petrol

*332. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government is aware that sugar factories in the country are capable enough to produce ethanol from sugarcane molasses which can be blended with petrol to solve the fuel problem to some extent;

(b)   whether Government is also aware that the petrol companies are reluctant to blend ethanol with petrol; and

(c)   if so, what steps have been taken to promote production of ethanol to be blended with petrol?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) The Sugar Industry in the country has the capability to produce ethanol from sugarcane molasses. Government introduced 5% Ethanol Blending Programme in 20 States and 4 Union Territories from 1st November 2006. However, against the requirement of 180 crore litres of ethanol for 5% EBP programme the sugar industry could supply 58.7 crore litres only over a three year period (Nov 2006- Oct 2009) to the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).

(b)   No Sir.

(c)   The OMCs are fully committed to implement the EBP programme and take entire quantity of ethanol made available by the domestic sugar industry at the contracted price. Government is taking steps to remove impendiments as well as for successful implementation of the programme.

Lapses in the implementation of MGNREGA

*333. SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the provisions for auditing and correctives enshrined in the law are being acted upon in order to make the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) effective;

(b)   whether the six working groups set up by the Central Employment Guarantee Council have pointed out serious lapses in the implementation of the Act; and

(c)   if so, the reaction of Government thereto?