

the previous draft of National Food Security Bill and has decided to increase the number of the beneficiaries under the Bill;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any basis has been determined to select the beneficiaries under this scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The National Food Security Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22nd December, 2011. The Bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution for examination. The Bill seeks to cover upto 75% of the rural population (with at least 46% belonging to the priority households) and upto 50% of the urban population (with at least 28% belonging to the priority households) for receiving subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). No amendment in the Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha has been proposed by the Government.

(c) and (d) The Bill provides that within the State-wise number of persons belonging to the priority households and general households, determined by the Central Government, identification of households shall be done by the State Governments or such other agency, in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the Central Government. The Ministry of Rural Development is coordinating the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), 2011 which is surveying all rural households in the country to collect information on a number of socioeconomic indicators. A similar exercise for identification of households in urban areas is being coordinated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. The methodology for identification of beneficiaries based on SECC, 2011 has not been arrived at.

Introduction of Food Security Bill

500. DR. BHALCHANDRA MUNGEKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would introduce the National Food Security Bill positively;

(b) if so, what preparations have been/are being made for its successful implementation; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The National Food Security Bill (NFSB), 2011 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22nd December, 2011.

(b) and (c) The proposed legislation will be implemented jointly by the Central and State Governments. Preparatory steps taken by the Government for successful implementation of NFSB, *inter alia*, include steps taken for increasing production and procurement of foodgrains, especially in the Eastern region of the country; increasing storage capacity for foodgrains under Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) scheme and under a Plan scheme for the North Eastern States; modernisation and computerization of Public Distribution System. Consultations with States/UTs have also been held and their views have been obtained.

Price rise of essential commodities

501. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of essential commodities including foodgrains and pulses have been rising constantly;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor alongwith the mechanism in place to control prices;

(c) the steps taken including action against hoarding and black marketing to control the same;

(d) whether any directive/advisory has been issued to the State in this regard; and

(e) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The wholesale prices in major trading centres of specific commodities over the last one year show that while in respect of rice, wheat, pulses (except gram) prices have shown a decline, that of sugar has registered a marginal increase, and that of select edible oils shown a sharp increase. The demand-supply mismatch in edible oils has led to imports and the volatility in international prices has affected the domestic price trends. The prices of all the essential commodities are closely monitored so that when there is rise in prices appropriate measures could be taken to control the prices.

(c) to (e) The steps taken by the Government to contain price rise in essential commodities are given in the Statement. [Refer to the Statement Appended to the Answer to SQ No. 80 (part IV)] The State Governments/UT Administrations have been delegated powers to take necessary action under the provisions of both "The Essential Commodities Act, 1980", to prevent hoarding and black marketing of essential commodities. The State Governments/UT Administrations have been repeatedly requested to strictly enforce both the Acts and also monitor enforcement of these Acts. Steps taken by the Government of India to check hoarding and blackmarketing of essential commodities are given in Statement.