

- (i) New FPSs may be opened wherever necessary to provide easy physical access to consumers. States and UTs are required to identify district-wise gaps and set targets to fill up the same.
- (ii) A norm of one FPS for every 2000 persons has been suggested to the States and Union Territories. However, there may be exceptions in view of the population density, terrain of the area, etc. Nevertheless, it needs to be ensured that no consumer/card-holder has to travel more than 3 Kms. to reach the FPS.
- (iii) In areas which cannot be covered by static FPSs, mobile vans may be introduced to cover the consumers residing in hilly, remote, far-flung, desert, tribal and inaccessible areas.
- (iv) In some rural areas, particularly in Tribal Areas, sale centers may be opened at weekly Haats to provide essential commodities at fixed prices.

Production cost of sugar

334. SHRI DARSHAN SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the production cost of sugar in different parts of the country, State-wise;
- (b) the States having highest cost of production;
- (c) the reasons therefor and its effect on the price of sugar; and
- (d) the steps being taken by Government to bring down the production cost of sugar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) The production cost of sugar depends upon various factors like availability of adequate raw material, recovery from sugarcane, duration of the season, plant size, efficiency of plant, technological up-gradation and diversification towards production of ethanol and power etc., State Advised Price of sugarcane, cost of working capital, managerial efficiency etc. Besides, the factors like State Advised Price of sugarcane, control of molasses etc. which affects cost of production substantially, are decided by the State Governments concerned. Therefore, the production cost varies from

factory to factory as also from State to State. As such, it is not possible to indicate the State-wise production cost of sugar and the Central Government does not maintain the data in this regard.

(d) It is the responsibility of the entrepreneur concerned to take necessary steps to reduce production cost in respect of private sector sugar mills and that of the State Governments/UT Administrations in the case of the public and cooperative sugar mills. The Central Government extends concessional loans from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) to sugar mills for (i) modernization/rehabilitation of plant and machinery (ii) sugarcane development (iii) production of ethanol from molasses and (iv) Bagasse-based cogeneration projects.

Prices of essential commodities

335. SHRI CP. NARAYANAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is taking any steps to monitor the prices of all essential commodities and also to regulate them;

(b) if so, what action plan has been prepared for the same; and

(c) the steps taken by Government against persons who are violating provisions of Essential Commodities Act and to maintain supplies of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) There is a mechanism in place to monitor the prices of essential commodities. Government closely monitors the wholesale/retail prices of select essential commodities from select centres across the country. The prevailing price situation as well as other factors which have impact on prices, both in domestic and international markets are studied and brought to the notice of high level committees, such as Committee of Secretaries (COS), Cabinet Committee on Prices (CCP) through agenda notes prepared for their meetings, for appropriate action at the policy level.

(c) Steps taken by the Government against persons who are violating provisions of Essential Commodities Act and to maintain supplies of essential commodities are given in Statement.