

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, 2011 (NFSB) was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22.12.2011 and thereafter referred to the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution for examination. The Standing Committee has given its report. The report has been examined by the Government in consultation with States/UTs, based on which the Government proposes to move some amendments to it. The proposed amendments in the Bill mainly aim to provide a simpler framework, offer more flexibility to State Governments and lower the financial burden on them.

(c) to (e) The NFSB *inter-alia* provides that the provisions of the Act shall not preclude the Central Government or the State Government from continuing or formulating other food based welfare schemes. This will enable States/UTs to implement other schemes for food and nutritional security of the people, out of their own resources, if they so desire, as long as the entitlements specified in the Bill are first met. Hence, there is no contradiction.

Coverage under food security bill

2982. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T. : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to extend food security to 70 per cent of the population;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any special emphasis is proposed to be made in backward districts of the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, with particular reference to Andhra Pradesh?

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, 2011 (NFSB), as introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22.12.2011, provides for coverage of up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population, for subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). This implies that about 67% of the total population will be eligible to receive subsidized foodgrains.

(c) and (d) NFSB provides that the Central and the State Governments shall, while implementing the provisions of the Act and schemes for meeting specified

entitlements, give special focus to the needs of vulnerable groups especially in remote and other areas which are difficult to access, hilly and tribal areas for ensuring their food security.

Study on onion trading

†2983. SHRI SHANTA KUMAR : Will the Minister of CORPORATE AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that a study report on the trading in onion has been prepared by the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore by the Competition Commission of India; and

(b) if so, the measures being taken by Government to check cartelization of prices of onion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI SACHIN PILOT) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) commissioned a study through Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore to have a comprehensive view of the agriculture markets as a whole and with specific focus on the onion markets in the States of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

(b) CCI took *suo moto* cognizance of the unusual rise in onion prices during December, 2010 but did not find substantial evidence pointing to the existence of cartel in onion market at that point of time. The ISEC Report titled 'Competitive Assessment of Onion Markets in India' containing a set of policy recommendations aimed at improving efficiency of market through competition has been circulated by CCI to the Ministry of Agriculture/State Governments to seek their views on further action to ensure competition in agricultural markets.

Working of CCI

†2984. SHRI OM PRAKASH MATHUR : Will the Minister of CORPORATE AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of objectives and executive powers of the Competition Commission of India (CCI);

(b) the number of cases of alleged violation of the concerned Act and the misuse of its influence in various fields that have come to the notice of the Commission; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.