

segment of foodgrain supply chain, from procurement to stocking to movement and finally distribution in TPDS, so that overall costs of the system are substantially reduced, leakages plugged, and it serves larger number of farmers and consumers. In this Endeavour it will make itself much leaner and nimble (with scaled down abolished Zonal Offices), focus on eastern States for procurement, upgrade the entire grain supply chain towards bulk handling and end to end computerization by bringing in investments, and technical and managerial expertise from the private sector.

#### **Improvement in infrastructure of PDS**

2649. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to revive the current Public Distribution System by bringing alternative mechanisms such as cash transfers and vouchers for plugging leakages of foodgrains in the country, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government for improvement in infrastructure that allow recipients greater ease in accessing benefits?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) With a view to modernize the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and to check leakages/diversion Government is implementing a Plan Scheme on 'End-to-end Computerization of TPDS Operations' on cost sharing basis with the States/UTs which would facilitate digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, computerization of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portal and grievance redressal mechanisms.

Direct Transfer of Cash subsidy is one of the options discussed at various forums for checking diversion of foodgrains. This has also been discussed with States/UTs. Its implementation however depends upon readiness of States/UTs in terms of digitization and de-duplication of beneficiary data-base seeded with Aadhaar and bank account numbers as sufficient availability of foodgrains in the open market. It can be taken up upon specific requests from States/UTs.

#### **Resolving problems of sugar industry**

2650. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Maharashtra has requested for consideration for resolving problems of sugar industry, if so, Government's response thereto; and

(b) whether Government is considering to release fund from Sugar Development Fund to Maharashtra, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The request of Government of Maharashtra for policy decisions on various issues relating to sugar industry has been considered by the Central Government. The incentive scheme for Marketing and Promotion Services of Raw Sugar Production targeted for export has been continued during current sugar season 2014-15. Import duty on sugar has been increased from 15% to 25% with effect from 20th August, 2014. The Ethanol Blending Policy has been modified under which remunerative prices have been fixed for procurement of ethanol for Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) and the tendering process has been dismantled.

(b) During the current Financial Year, as on 11.3.2015, assistance from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) amounting to ₹ 140.05 crores has been provided to 19 sugar undertakings of Maharashtra under various SDF schemes. Besides, funds available in the SDF are being used for export incentive to sugar mills in the country, including those in Maharashtra.

#### **Implementation of NFSA**

†2651. DR. SANJAY SINH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by Government to implement food security programme in a better way;

(b) the names of the States which have implemented the National Food Security Act, so far;

(c) the details of assistance being given to these States, State-wise, especially Uttar Pradesh;

(d) the number of needy families benefited by this programme so far district-wise State-lists of these families; and

(e) the specific steps being taken by Government to implement food security programme in the country so that the real needy persons can get benefit from this programme?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) to (e) Government has enacted the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) on 10.09.2013 which has deemed to have come into force on 05.07.2013. Under NFSA, responsibility of Central Government is mainly to allocate foodgrains at subsidized prices to the States/

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.