

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3914
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12TH AUGUST, 2026

SUGARCANE PRODUCTIVITY AND BIOFUEL EXPANSION

3914 MRS RUCHI VIRA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government agrees with the view that expansion of sugarcane-based ethanol production would assist in increasing farmers' income, strengthening energy security and promoting sustainable agriculture in the country;
- (b) if so, the policy measures taken by the Government to augment sustainable production of sugarcane and other approved raw materials for ethanol production without affecting food security;
- (c) the details of initiatives undertaken by the Government to promote sugarcane productivity, water use efficiency, climate-resilient farming and quality planting material;
- (d) the details of support provided by the Government in the form of financial assistance, research collaboration and technical support to sugarcane farmers to meet the growing demand for ethanol; and
- (e) the likely impact of these initiatives on farmers' income, rural employment, biofuel production, resource conservation and long-term agricultural sustainability?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS,
FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRIMATI NIMUBEN JAYANTIBHAI BAMBHANIYA)

(a): The Government is encouraging sugar mills to divert excess sugar only, after ensuring sufficient availability of sugar for domestic consumption, for production of ethanol in the country. Diversion of surplus sugar to ethanol production has led to improved financial viability of sugar mills. As a result, sugar mills are able to pay Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane to farmers timely. Sugarcane farmers are benefitted by increase in FRP by the Government every year.

(b): The Government in every sugar season, regularly monitors the estimates of sugarcane production. The topmost priority of the Government is to ensure the availability of sufficient sugar for domestic consumption at reasonable prices. Government is encouraging sugar mills to divert excess sugar only, after ensuring sufficient availability of sugar for domestic consumption, for production of ethanol in the country.

The Government accords highest priority to food security in the country. FCI rice, only when available in excess, is being diverted for ethanol production, after meeting the requirements of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) and maintaining buffer stock. Promotion of maize by the Government as an alternative feedstock has helped in diversifying the scope of raw material for production of ethanol in India. Maize has emerged as the biggest feedstock for ethanol supplies for blending purposes.

In order to support & ensure food security in the country, the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is implementing the National Food Security and Nutrition Mission (NFSNM) (erstwhile NFSM) in 28 States & 2 Union Territories (J&K and Ladakh) with the objective of increasing production and productivity of foodgrains like rice, wheat, maize, barley & Shree Anna. Commercial crops like sugarcane are also covered under the mission.

(c): Under the Sugarcane component of NFSNM, assistance is being provided to demonstration on intercropping & single bud chip technology, breeder seed production, production/supply of tissue culture plantlets, distribution of plant protection chemical & bioagents and trainings. The Government also provides flexibility to the State, for State specific needs/priorities including on sugarcane under the Detailed Project Report (DPR) component of Pradhan Mantri – Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY).

To Promote sustainable agriculture practices in the country, several scheme are being implemented to encourage farmers such as Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF), Per Drop More Crop (PDMC), Soil Health & Fertility Scheme. The PDMC scheme increases water use efficiency at the farm level through micro irrigation technologies i.e. drip and sprinkler irrigation. PKVY & NMNF are implemented for promotion of organic and natural farming respectively among the farmers. Soil Health & Fertility scheme promote judicious and balanced use of fertilizers.

Two institutes under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) namely, ICAR-Indian Sugarcane Research Institute, Lucknow and ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore along with All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on sugarcane are conducting basic, applied and strategic research and focusing on the development of high yielding climate resilient varieties of sugarcane.

During past five years (2021-2025), forty-seven Sugarcane varieties have been released and notified out of which 33 are extreme climate tolerant including 16 drought/moisture stress/water stress tolerant; 9 flood/ submergence tolerant water-logging tolerant varieties; 7 are salinity/moderate salinity /alkalinity/sodic soils tolerant varieties and one is cold/frost/winter chilling tolerant variety.

(d): During last five years, 2,51,941.5 quintals of planting material of sugarcane were produced and supplied to farmers. Additionally, 855.6 lakh units of planting material and 52.3 lakh units of tissue- culture plantlets were produced and supplied to farmers. Besides, Government Institutes are also developing the location specific production and protection technologies, which are disseminated among farmers for large-scale adoption.

Government support farmers and other stakeholders through the development and dissemination of high yielding and climate resilient sugarcane varieties, improved crop production

and protection technologies. Regular capacity building programmes, demonstrations, farmers' trainings, field days, and technical advisories are organized to facilitate the adoption of improved technologies. Government also collaborate with State Agricultural Universities, State Departments of Agriculture, sugar mills and other stakeholders for technology validation, seed multiplication, and dissemination of improved production and protection technologies.

(e): Utilization of excess sugarcane for production of ethanol provides the sugar mills liquidity for ensuring timely payment of sugarcane farmers. The initiatives/schemes such as Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF), Per Drop More Crop (PDMC), Soil Health & Fertility Scheme etc. support sustainable, resource-efficient, and low-input farming. Also, the climate resilient crops reduce the risk of crop failure. All these measures taken by the Government bring long-term agricultural sustainability for sugarcane farmers.
