

Government of India
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Department of Consumer Affairs

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1406
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.02.2019

STRENGTHENING OF CONSUMER FORA

1406. DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT: SHRI DHANANJAY MAHADIK: DR. J. JAYAVARDHAN: SHRI MOHITE PATIL VIJAYSINH SHANKARRAO: SHRIMATI KAMLA DEVI PAATLE: SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: SHRI SATAV RAJEEV:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the inordinate delay in disposing of cases filed in various consumer fora across the country, if so, the reasons for the same and the time-frame for the disposal of such cases by the various fora in a time bound manner;
- (b) whether the consumers in the country are not educated about the consumer rights they enjoy, if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to create awareness about the consumer rights and Consumer Act especially in the rural areas along with the outcome thereof;
- (c) whether any consumer awareness programme has been undertaken in the country, particularly in the State of Maharashtra and if so, the details of the activities undertaken under the said programme along with the amount of funds sanctioned for the purpose during each of the last three years and the current year;
- (d) the details of the steps taken for empowering/strengthening of the consumer fora as well as making a provision for online registration of complaints to ensure speedy disposal of cases; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to make amendment in the Consumer Protection Act with a view to make it more effective and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण राज्य मंत्री
(श्री सी. आर. चौधरी)

THE MINISTER OF STATE
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY)

(a) : Yes, Madam. The increasing number of cases filed, in the Consumer Fora, lack of infrastructural facilities etc are some of the factors for the delay in disposal of cases by the Consumer Fora. To expedite disposal of cases in the consumer fora, the National Commission holds Circuit Benches sittings in different States, conducts sittings in summer vacation and has also constituted Single Member Bench(es) for speedy disposal of cases.

(b) & (c) : No, Madam. Consumers in the country are aware of their rights, which is evident from the fact of growing number of consumer complaints being registered in the Consumer Fora and National Consumer Helpline every year.

The Government carries out a multi-media campaign “Jago Grahak Jago” on pan-India basis covering both rural and urban areas through print, electronic and outdoor media. Grants-in-aid are also released to States/UTs for creating consumer awareness in the respective States/UTs in their regional languages so as to further ensure that the campaign reaches the rural and backward areas of the country by way of focusing on hoardings, village mandis, agricultural regulated markets/vegetables markets at prominent places in rural areas. Rupees fifty lakh was released to Government of Maharashtra in 2014-15 for creating consumer awareness in the state .

(d) : The Central Government has been providing financial assistance to the states for strengthening infrastructure of the Consumer Fora. Computer hardware/software and technical manpower are provided to the Consumer Fora for computerization of their functioning. There is no provision for online registration of complaints in the existing Consumer Protection Act.

(e) : To make the consumer protection legislation more effective and to keep pace with the changes that have taken place in the market over the years, the Consumer Protection Bill 2018 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 5th January, 2018 to replace the existing Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The Bill seeks to provide for establishment of an executive agency to be known as the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect and enforce the rights of the consumers, provision of mediation as an alternate dispute resolution, provision of product liability action and several other provisions for simplification of the consumer disputes adjudication process in the consumer fora. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on 20th December, 2018 and has been sent to the Rajya Sabha for consideration and passing.
