

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1878

ANSWERED ON:09.03.2010

FUNCTIONING OF CONSUMER FORA

Laguri Shri Yashbant Narayan Singh;Lal Shri Pakauri;Ramasubbu Shri S.

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

- (a) the number of States and District Consumer Fora functioning in the country including Orissa, State-wise;
- (b) the number of cases registered, disposed of and pending under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 during each of the last three years and the current year, State- wise;
- (c) whether the State Governments have failed to properly implement the Consumer Protection Act, 1986;
- (d) if so, the details of the complaints received in this regard alongwith the action taken on such complaints;
- (e) whether the culprits are getting the benefit of the delay caused in the judicial process;
- (f) if so, the steps taken/proposed for speedy disposal of consumer cases; and
- (g) the steps taken to improve the infrastructure and appoint adequate members and staffn in these Fora?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a): As per information made available by National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), the State-wise number of State Commissions and District Fora functioning in the country including Orissa is at Annexure-I.

(b): As per information made available by National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), the State-wise number of cases registered, disposed of and pending under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 during each of the last three years and the current year in respect of National Commission & State Commission and District Fora are at Annexures II(A), II(B) & II (C) respectively.

(c) & (d): Out of over 33 lakh cases filed since inception in all Consumer Fora in the country, 29.8 lakh cases stand disposed off with a percentage disposal rate of nearly 89%.

However, in case of receipt of any complaint in this Department, the same is forwarded to the National Commission, which has the administrative control over State Commissions in terms of Section 24B of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

(e): As per information given by NCDRC, the consumer complaints are decided as per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, Consumer Protection Rules; 1987 and Consumer Protection Regulations. 2005 framed thereunder. Generally, the complaints filed before the Consumer Fora are not dismissed on technical grounds.

In the Consumer Fora, complaint against whom is filed, is called Opposite Party. Unless the complaint is decided, it cannot be said that the Opposite Party is taking advantage of procedural delay in disposal of cases.

(f): The important steps being taken by the Central Government to expedite disposal of complaints are as under:

(i) Financial assistance is being provided to the States/UTs for strengthening their infrastructure. `CONFONET` scheme for computerization and networking of Consumer Fora across the country is also being implemented which is expected to bring about systematization of Consumer Fora and improve their efficiency.

(ii) With an objective to facilitate the Fora in quicker disposal of cases, several provisions were made through Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act. 2002 which included enabling the Senior Most Member to preside over the Consumer Fora if the President is absent for any reasons, establishment of Circuit Benches of National Commission/State Commissions and providing for reappointment of President/Members of Consumer Fora.

(iii) The Central Government has been requesting State Governments to take advance action for filling up expected vacancies of President and Members. They have also been advised that wherever required, adjacent Fora can be clubbed together. Benches can

also be established in Consumer Fora, as required.

(iv) The State Govts have been advised that the Consumer Fora should also resort to Lok Adalat method for disposing off long pending complaints.

(g): Since 2006-07 onwards, a total amount of rupees 89.53 crores has been released to 21 States for strengthening the infrastructure of Consumer Fora under the schemes of 'Integrated Project on Consumer Protection' & 'Strengthening Consumer Fora'.

As regards appointment of adequate Members and staff in these Fora, this is the responsibility of the concerned State Governments. However, as regards appointment of Members in Consumer Fora, as indicated in reply to part (f) above, the Central Government has been requesting State Governments to take advance action to fill up expected vacancies.