

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:125
ANSWERED ON:20.02.2006
PENDENCY OF CONSUMER CASES
Jha Shri Raghunath;Singh Shri Prabhunath

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

- (a) whether there is any stipulation of time for disposal of cases by consumer courts;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the reasons for delay in disposal of cases beyond the stipulated period;
- (d) whether such delay has led to huge pendency of consumer cases and consequent harassment of consumers by the unscrupulous manufacturers/traders; and
- (e) if so, the steps being taken by the Government for speedy disposal of consumer cases?

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 (SHRI TASILMUDDIN)

(a) &(b): As per Section 13 (3A) of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (as amended from time to time), every complaint shall be heard as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to decide the complaint within a period of three months from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities, and within five months, if it requires analysis or testing of commodities.

(c) : The Consumer Fora are attempting as far as possible to adhere to the time limit as prescribed by the Act. There may be delays due to non-functioning of certain District Fora on account of vacancies of Presidents/Members, inadequate infrastructure facilities, non establishment of additional District Fora where deemed necessary, inadequate funds and inadequate staff.

(d) : The National Commission, State Commissions and District Fora have disposed off 80.97%, 69.95% & 89.95% respectively of cases filed before them. Thus, it cannot be concluded that such delay has led to huge pendency of Consumer cases and consequent harassment of consumers by the unscrupulous manufacturers/traders.

(e) : Following are some of the important steps taken by the Government for speedy disposal of cases:

(i) A project for computerization and computer networking of consumer fora throughout the country has been launched in March, 2005 which is expected to increase the efficiency of the Consumer Fora.

(ii) The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was amended in 2002 mainly to facilitate quicker disposal of cases.

(iii) Central Government and the NCDRC have been suggesting various remedial measures to the State Governments and also requesting them from time to time, not to allow the consumer fora to remain non-functional as also to provide adequate facilities to the consumer fora, facilitate setting up of additional benches of State Commissions and additional District Fora where deemed necessary.

(iv) NCDRC as well as Department of Consumer Affairs hold regular meetings/Conferences with Presidents of State Commissions and Secretaries in charge of Consumer Affairs of States/UTs to monitor and review the functioning of Consumer Fora in the Country.

(v) The National Commission, with the approval of the Central Govt. has notified the Consumer Protection Regulations, 2005 to streamline the procedure for day to day functioning of the consumer fora.