

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2973

ANSWERED ON:08.12.2009

CONSUMER AWARENESS

Das Shri Ram Sundar;Kumar Shri Shailendra;Patel Shri R.K. Singh;Swamygowda Shri N Cheluvaraya Swamy

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

- (a) the total amount spent on consumer awareness programmes during each of the last three years and the current year;
- (b) whether any assessment has been made regarding the impact of implementation of Consumer Protection Act in the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the number of consumer complaints received and those dismissed on technical grounds during each of the last three years and the current year;
- (e) the steps being taken by the Union Government to bring more awareness among the public about the Consumer Protection Act and to protect the interest of the consumers;
- (f) whether accused persons under the Act are taking benefit of procedural delays in disposal of the cases; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor alongwith the remedial measures taken in this regard?

Answer

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

(a): Department has incurred following expenditure on Consumer awareness scheme.

Sl.No.	Year	Expenditure (Rs. in crores)
1	2006-07	69.39

2	2007-08	45.09
---	---------	-------

3	2008-09	84.50
---	---------	-------

4	2009-10	48.00 (Till 30-11-2009)
---	---------	-------------------------

(b): No Madam. The Department of Consumer Affairs has not made any assessment regarding the impact of implementation of Consumer Protection Act in the country.

(c): Does not arise.

(d): 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. However, in case the complainant/appellant/petitioner does not appear, after due notice, before the Consumer Fora on the date of hearing, the matter is dismissed for non-prosecution. Thereafter, if the complainant/appellant/petitioner makes an application for restoration of matter, the same is restored unless the lawyer/party is very negligent in pursuing the matter.

(e): The Government is running the Multi Media Publicity campaign Jago Grahak Jago through which apart from other topics of relevance to consumers, awareness is being spread about the provisions of consumer Protection Act 1986. Campaign has been undertaken on the different themes/subjects such as Banking, Education, Legal Metrology, Public Distribution System, Travel Services, Telecommunications and Medicines etc.

(f) to (g): 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 delays in disposal of cases. The Consumer Fora pass orders for awarding compensation to the parties but they are finding difficulty in execution of the orders as they do not have their own implementing agency and send the same to the concerned State agency for execution.

The following steps are being taken by the National Commission Dispute Redressal Commission for effective functioning of the Consumer Fora in the country since as per Section 24B(l) of Consumer Protection Act, 1986, the National Commission shall have administrative control over all the State Commissions in the following matters, namely:

- (i) calling for periodical return regarding the institution, disposal pendency of cases;
- (ii) issuance of instructions regarding adoption of uniform procedure in the hearing of matters, prior service of copies of documents produced by one party to the opposite parties, furnishing of English translation of judgments written in any language, speedy grant of copies of documents;
- (iii) generally overseeing the functioning of the State Commissions or the District Fora to ensure that the objects and purposes of the Act are best served without in any way interfering with their quasi-judicial freedom.

As per Section 24B(2) of the Act, the State Commission shall have administrative control over all the District Fora within its jurisdiction in all matters referred to in sub-section

(i) The National Commission holds annual Conference of the Presidents & Registrars of the State Commissions and Secretaries in-charge of Consumer Affairs in the States/UTs to evaluate the functioning of the Consumer Fora in the country and effective implementation of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and issue necessary guidelines.

(ii) The President of the National Commission regularly interacts with the Presidents of the State Commissions to get first hand information regarding functioning of the State Commissions & District Fora and the difficulties faced by them.

(iii) For timely filling up the vacancies of the Presidents and Members in the District Fora and the State Commissions, President of the National Commission takes up the matter with states. Central Govt. is also reviewing and calls for periodic report on functioning of the Consumer Fora at the State & district level.

(iv) Some of the State Commissions and District Fora are adopting the process of holding Lok Adalats for speedy disposal of the cases.

(v) The National Commission also holds Circuit Bench sittings as per the provisions of Section 22 C of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, for rendering speedy justice at the doorsteps of the consumers of that particular State. So far, the National Commission has held Circuit Bench sittings at Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Pune & Kochi and in the month January & February 2010 the National Commission, has proposed to bold Circuit Bench sittings in Kolkata.

(vi) In the National Commission 05 benches are functioning.

(vii) In the following States, Additional Benches are functioning:

- (a) Gujarat - 03 Additional Benches
- (b) Maharashtra - Additional Bench at Nagpur & Aurangabad
- (c) Uttar Pradesh - 01 Additional Bench
- (d) West Bengal - 01 Additional Bench

(viii) The National Commission has recently launched a `Consumer Advocate` (quarterly) containing the important judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and National Commission and the copies of the same are being sent to all the State Commissions and District Fora for their use.