

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:15

ANSWERED ON:09.11.2010

NEW CONSUMER LAW

Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan;Deora Shri Milind Murlu

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

- (a) whether the Government is contemplating to formulate a new law for safeguarding the interest of consumers in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the time by which it is likely to be implemented;
- (d) the details and nature of the body proposed to be constituted under the new law for dispensing justice to the consumers;
- (e) the number of consumer redressal commission in the country alongwith the number of cases registered, disposed and pending during the last two years and the current year, State-wise; and
- (f) the other steps taken to ensure speedy delivery of justice to the consumers?

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) to (d): A proposal to set up a National Consumer Protection Regulatory Authority is under consideration in consultation all the stake holders.

(e): Details in this regard may be seen at Annexure I & II.

(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.

(v) In addition the National Commission also takes the following steps for speedy disposal of cases in the Consumer Forum.

(a) The Hon'ble President of the National Commission regularly writes letters to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of States to meet the shortcomings in the Consumer Fora, particularly with regard to appointment of President / Members in the State Commissions, providing sufficient staff and infrastructure etc. as well as interacts with the Presidents of the State Commissions to get the first hand information regarding functioning of the State Commissions & District Forums, pendency of the cases and the difficulties faced by them.

(b) The National Commission also advises the State Commissions and District Forums to adopt the process of holding Lok Adalats for speedy disposal of the cases. 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, and Kolkata.

(c) In the following States Circuit Benches / Additional Benches are functioning

(a) Gujarat 03 Additional Benches

(b) Maharashtra Circuit Bench at Nagpur & Aurangabad

(c) Uttar Pradesh 01 Additional Bench

(d) West Bengal 01 Additional Bench

(e) Madhya Pradesh 01 Additional Bench

(f) Punjab 01 Additional Bench

(d) In addition to the existing five Benches of the National Commission, the Central Government has recently sanctioned one additional bench for the National Commission for a period of five years for disposing off backlog of pending cases.