

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5237

ANSWERED ON:08.05.2012

DISPOSAL OF CONSUMER CASES

Gaddigoudar Shri P.C.;Kishor Shri Kamal ;Rathwa Shri Ramsinhbhai Patalbhai;Reddy Shri Modugula Venugopala

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

(a) whether various consumer fora in the country are adopting the process of holding Lok Adalats for speedy disposal of consumer cases;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the Union Government has undertaken any comprehensive consumer awareness programme in the country including in Andhra Pradesh;

(d) if so, the details of activities undertaken under the said programme alongwith the amount of funds sanctioned for the purpose during each of the last three years;and

(e) 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?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): Yes Madam. Lok Adalats for disposal of consumer cases are being regularly held. State-wise details of cases disposed off by Lok Adalat Methods as on 01.05.2012 is at Annexure.

(c) & (d): The Department of Consumer affairs has undertaken a comprehensive Consumer Awareness Programme in the country including Andhra Pradesh. Advertisements are being released through Print media. Electronic media & Outdoor media through a nationwide publicity campaign i4Jago Grahak Jago` with focus on rural & remote areas. During last three years following amount has been spent on media campaign under `Jago Grahak Jago`.

S.No. Year Amount
in Crore of Rs.

1. 2009-10 70.60

2. 2010-11 80.27

3. 2011-12 85.65

The department has also published advertisements in Saving Bank Passbooks of Postal Department, Tirupati Entry tickets and Railway Reservation tickets. Consumer oriented messages have been displayed in various stalls in exhibitions and conferences. Bureau of Indian Standards, an autonomous body of the department and National Test House have also participated in various exhibitions highlighting consumer rights and responsibilities.

The Grants-in-aid released to Govt. of Andhra Pradesh for undertaking consumer awareness activities are as under:

(In lakhs of Rupees)
Year Amount

2006-07 28.75

2007-08 23.00

2010-11 46.00

2011-12 34.50

The steps taken are as under:

(1) Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government to the States/UTs for strengthening of infrastructure of Consumer Fora (Building as well as Non-Building Assets). The Computerization and Computer Networking of all the Consumer Fora across the country is also being implemented through NIC, under the 'CONFONET' Scheme.

(2) The Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2011 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 16.12.2011, with provisions made for empowering the Consumer Fora for faster decision on disposal of cases, simplifying selection procedure to avoid any delay in selection of Members/President, online filing of applications and strengthening of Penalty Provisions etc.

(3) The State Governments have been requested from time to time to take action well in advance for filling up of vacancies of President and Members and to maintain a panel of candidates for filling up of future vacancies also to avoid delays in appointments. The Central Government has also requested State Governments that wherever required, adjacent Fora may be clubbed together so that functioning of Consumer Fora is not affected due to any temporary absence or vacancy.

(4) In order to dispose of the pending cases, Circuit Benches from National Commission have been frequently visiting States. So far, the National Commission has held Circuit Bench sittings at Hyderabad , Bangalore , Chennai, Pune, Kolkata, Emakulam, Ahmedabad and Bhopal . Some State Commissions have constituted Additional Benches mainly to dispose off backlog of pending cases.

(5) Some of the State Commissions and District Fora are adopting the process of holding Lok Adalats for speedy disposal of the cases. The National Commission has also held Lok Adalats aiming to reduce the pendency of cases and also faster disposal of cases.