

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3928

ANSWERED ON:18.12.2012

ASSISTANCE FOR CONSUMER FORA

Ju Dev Shri Dilip Singh;Rajendran Shri C.;Swamygowda Shri N Cheluvarya Swamy

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

- (a) whether consumer courts have been setup at State and district levels;
- (b) if so, the details of districts where such courts have not been constituted till date, State-wise;
- (c) the facilities and assistance provided by the Union Government to the States for setting up of such courts;
- (d) whether a number of cases are pending before these courts;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor indicating the number of cases registered, disposed of and pending along with the period of pendency; and
- (f) the steps taken for speedy disposal of all the cases?

Answer

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

(a): Yes, Madam.

(b): A statement showing the number of Consumer Fora established at the State/District level may be seen at Annexure-I.

(c): Under the scheme of 'Strengthening Consumer Fora (SCF)', financial assistance is provided to the States/UTs for strengthening the infrastructure of building as well as non-building assets, such as computers, furniture, etc.

(d) to (f): As per information made available by National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), as on 04.12.2012, out of 3873772 cases filed in Consumer Fora at three tier level since inception 3524221 cases (almost 91%) have been disposed off. Merely, 349551 number of cases are pending before these Fora. The details are given at Annexure-II.

The steps taken/proposed to be taken for speedy disposal of the cases are as under:

(1) 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 delay 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.

(2) 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, Ernakulam, Ahmedabad and Bhopal. Some State Commissions have constituted Additional Benches mainly to dispose off backlog of pending cases.

(3) 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.

(4) 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.

(5) 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 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.