

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:310

ANSWERED ON:26.02.2013

CONSUMER FORA

Agarwal Shri Jai Prakash;Jaiswal Shri Gorakh Prasad ;Singh Rajkumari Ratna;Swamygowda Shri N Cheluvaraya Swamy

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

- (a) the number of States and district level consumer fora functioning in the country along with the financial assistance provided for setting up such fora during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has assessed the functioning of these fora;
- (c) if so, the details and the outcome thereof along with the corrective steps taken thereon to ensure timely disposal of cases;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to amend the Consumer Protection Act to make it more effective and relevant to the present requirements; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a):The number of functional State Commissions and District Fora functioning in the country is 35 and 612 respectively as on 20.02.2013. The State-wise financial assistance released for strengthening the infrastructure of Consumer Fora during each of the last three years and the current year is at Annexure.

(b) & (c):The Central Government and National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) monitor the functioning of Consumer Fora through Periodical (Quarterly & Monthly) Reports received from States/UTs. This is also discussed through various Fora including, inter- alia, Video Conferences, Conferences on the occasion of 'World Consumer Rights Day' held with Secretaries in-charge of Consumer Affairs in States/UTs and Presidents of State Commissions.

The steps 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.
- (2) Circuit Benches from National Commission have been frequently visiting States.
- (3) Some State Commissions have constituted Additional Benches mainly to dispose off backlog of pending cases.
- (4) The National Commission and some of the State Commissions as well as District Fora are adopting the process of holding Lok Adalats for speedy disposal of the cases.
- (5) Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government to the States/UTs for strengthening of infrastructure of Consumer Fora including computerization and networking.

(d) & (e): Yes, Madam, the Government proposes to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 to strengthen consumer protection system and to make it more responsive to needs of consumers in present scenario.

The salient features of the proposed Amendment are:

- (1) Introduction of digital adjudication through CONFONET Scheme.
- (2) Deemed admission of complaint after 28 days.
- (3) Provision for clubbing neighboring district forum.
- (4) Provision for circuit benches at district level.

(5) Increase in deposit amount for filling appeal.