

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3911

ANSWERED ON:18.02.2014

MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS

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

- (a) whether the Government has received any reports/complaints regarding misleading/surrogate advertisements making false and exaggerated claims about the products appearing in the electronic and the print media;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of cases reported/identified, companies held responsible along with the action taken against the persons/companies involved therein during each of the last three years and the current year;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to bring a comprehensive legislation incorporating various rules and regulations presently in vogue to put an effective check on such cases and if so, the details thereof indicating the regulations/legislations presently available in this regard;
- (d) the role of various agencies in regulating the content and quality of advertisements along with the steps taken to bring coordination among them;and
- (e) the steps taken to strengthen the consumer protection movement in the country along with the success achieved therein?

**Answer**

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

- (a) Yes Madam, the Government has received complaints regarding misleading advertisements making false and exaggerated claims about the products appearing in the electronic and the print media.
- (b) The complaints are generally addressed to various Ministries dealing with the products. The list of complaints received in Department of Consumer Affairs are at Annexure.
- (c) Central Consumer Protection Council has decided setting up of a committee to monitor misleading advertisement and unfair trade practices arising thereto in Department of Consumer Affairs. However, at present the aggrieved consumers can file complaint in Consumer Fora, established under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Remedies are also available under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, Press council Act, 1978, the Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act, 1956, Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1955 etc.
- (d) The above mentioned Committee will coordinate efforts of various agencies.
- (e) To strengthen the consumer protection movement in the country following steps are being taken by the Department of Consumer Affairs:
  - (i) Under a scheme called "Strengthening Consumer Fora" the State Governments are provided grants for strengthening the infrastructure of District Consumer Fora and State Commission.
  - (ii) State Consumer Help Lines have been set upto help consumers lodge their complaints and to guide them in their cases.
  - (iii) The Publicity Division of Department of Consumer Affairs is implementing a plan scheme namely "JagoGrahakJago" for creating Consumer Awareness throughout the country.
  - (iv) Organizations like Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) lay down minimum standards for quality of goods and services and enforces use of 'ISI' marks.
  - (v) Organizations like National Test House (NTH) provides facilities for testing various products and services.
  - (vi) The Department provides grants to various NGOs/VCOs for Consumer Welfare activities.

As per various studies the efforts of the Government in spreading Consumer awareness has succeeded considerably in strengthening consumer movement in the country. The evaluation report of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) on the Impact and

Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 conducted in 2012 reveals that 70.6% of the consumers are aware about the MRP, 70.5% about ISI Mark, 41.3% about AGMARK and 47.2% about Hallmark among others. Moreover, out of the respondents who know about the CP Act, 28.9% came to know about it for the last three years, 26.7% for the last six years, 14.1% know about the Act for the last 9 years, 13.1% know about the Act for last 15 years and 4.1% of the respondents know about the CP Act for more than 15 years.