

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2169

ANSWERED ON:10.03.2015

CONSUMER FORA

Charitra Shri Ram;Deka Shri Ramen;Dubey Shri Nishikant ;Ering Shri Ninong;Jena Shri Rabindra Kumar;Kumar Shri P.;Scindia Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao

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

- (a) whether the Government has made any assessment regarding the efficacy of the consumer law to protect the interest of consumers, if so, the details and the outcome thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (b) the total number of cases pending in consumer forums along with the reasons for pendency, State and year-wise;
- (c) whether there is anytime stipulation for disposal of consumer cases if so, the details thereof along with the number of cases pending beyond this stipulated time frame, State-wise;
- (d) whether the disposal of cases has been adversely affected due to inadequate infrastructure in the said forums, if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken in this regard along with the details of the forums that have been fully computerized and inter-linked;
- (e) the action plan formulated and the measures undertaken to provide adequate infrastructure for time bound disposal of cases along with the success achieved therein; and
- (f) whether the Government has undertaken any campaign including publishing of advertisements in local/ vernacular newspapers to create awareness about consumer Law and Forums, if so, the details thereof indicating the number of such campaigns launched during the said period, State-wise?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)

(a) : Yes, Madam. The Government had initiated the study through Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi. The study revealed the following:

- i. Involvement of lawyers in District Forum;
- ii. Inadequate lab testing facility;
- iii. Problem in execution of the orders of the District Forum;
- iv. Because of small compensation, consumers lose interest in the case;
- v. Lack of capacity of the members to adjudicate the case;
- vi. Inadequate infrastructure/man-power

The Government has decided to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 comprehensively so that the rights of the Consumers can be better protected.

(b) : Yes. In all 372255 cases are pending at National, State and District Fora level. Out of which, 10566 cases are pending in National, 91278 cases are pending in State and 270411 cases are pending in District Fora.

The statements (Annexure ? A & B) showing the pendency of cases in the Consumer Fora (State/year-wise) are attached. Some of the main reasons for large pendency are as under:

- (i) Non filling up the post of President & Members of the Consumer Fora.
- (ii) Shortage of supporting staff.
- (iii) Insufficient infrastructure in the Consumer Fora.

(c) : As per the provisions of Clause 3A Section 13 of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 every complaint shall be heard as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to decide the complaint within a period of three months from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities and within five months if it requires analysis or testing of commodities. The number of pending cases has been given in Annexure ? (A & B).

(d) & (e) : Inadequate infrastructure is one of the reasons which have affected the disposal of cases. The steps taken for improving the Consumer Fora are as under:

Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government to the States/UTs for strengthening of infrastructure of Consumer Fora including computerization and networking. Hardware have been supplied at 550 Consumer Forums (34 State Commissions and 516 District Consumer Forums). Online access have been provided to 521 Consumer Forums (33 State Commissions and 488 District Consumer Forums).

(f) The Department of Consumer Affairs regularly carries out awareness campaign on various consumer related issues including messages on consumer Law and Forums under the "Jago Grahak Jago" program through various medium like newspapers, Magazines, Doordarshan, All India Radio, Lok Sabha Television, Pvt. FM Radio Stations, C&S Channels, Digital Cinema, Community Radio & Hoardings etc. The campaigns are done on All India basis and not state-wise.