

Stopping of purchases from NCCF

1456. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided not to extend the special dispensation services permit to purchase stationery and other articles from National Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF); and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The special dispensation permit whose validity extended on year to year basis by Department of Personnel & Training / Department of Expenditure has been discontinued w.e.f. 1.4.2015 after an analytical study by Cost Accounts Branch of Department of Expenditure regarding its cost implication.

Pendency of cases in consumer fora

1457. SHRI DEREK O BRIEN : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending in consumer fora across the country;

(b) the reasons for high pendency rates in consumer fora;

(c) the average time taken for disposal of consumer disputes; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to reduce pendency of cases?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) As on 15.4.2015, 10,566 cases in the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, 89,511 cases in the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions and 2,75,038 cases in the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Fora are pending.

(b) There are several reasons for high pendency rate in Consumer Fora such as:

(i) Increasing awareness about their rights among consumers leading to greater number of cases;

(ii) delay in timely filling up of posts in various Consumer Fora;

(iii) the usual adjudication process involving adjournment etc;

(iv) the provision for multiple appeals available to consumers.

(c) As per provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, endeavour shall be made to decide a consumer complaint within three months. No data is maintained on average time taken for disposal of consumer disputes.

(d) The Government has taken the following steps to reduce the pendency:-

- (i) State Governments are being requested from time to time to take action well in advance for filling up of vacancies of President and Member and to maintain a panel of candidates for filling up of future vacancies also to avoid delay in appointments.
- (ii) Circuit Benches from National Commission have been frequently visiting the States.
- (iii) Some State Commissions have constituted Additional Benches mainly to dispose of backlog of pending cases.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government to the States/UTs for strengthening of infrastructure of Consumer Fora including computerization and networking.
- (vi) Consumer Protection Act, 1986 is being comprehensively amended to provide for inter-alia, speedy disposal of cases.

Reduction of levied rice limit

1458. SHRI ANAND SHARMA : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :-

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to reduce the levied rice limit to 25 per cent;

(b) whether there has been an assessment of the likely impact on farmers from this decision; and

(c) the policy measures proposed by Government to protect the farmers' interests?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) Yes Sir, Government has