

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 845
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.12.2024

ENHANCING CONSUMER AWARENESS

845. SHRI S. KALYANASUNDARAM

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

- (a) the steps taken to increase consumer awareness;
- (b) the steps taken to simplify the processes of consumer courts; and
- (c) the measures enforced to prevent retailers from overcharging above Maximum Retail Price (MRP)?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI B.L VERMA)

(a) : Consumer awareness is being generated by the Department of Consumer Affairs by undertaking country-wide multimedia awareness campaigns under the aegis of "Jago Grahak Jago" to reach out to every consumer across the country by utilizing traditional media like All India Radio, Doordarshan, fairs & festivals, etc. as well as social media. Through simple messages and jingles, consumers are made aware about the unfair trade practices, consumer issues and the mechanism to seek redressal. The Department had also launched "Jagriti", a mascot for empowering consumers and making them aware of their rights. The mascot aims to strengthen consumer awareness campaign and reinforce a young empowered and informed consumer.

(b) : With a view to modernize the framework governing the consumer protection in the new era of globalization, technologies, e-commerce markets etc. Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was enacted.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides for a three tier quasi-judicial machinery at District, State and Central levels commonly known as "Consumer Commissions" for protection of the rights of consumers and to provide simple and speedy redressal of consumer disputes including those related with unfair trade practices.

Salient features of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 are simplification of the adjudication process in the Consumer Commissions; filing of a complaint by a consumer in the Consumer Commission having jurisdiction over the complainant's place of residence/work or where the cause of action arises, or the place of business or residence of the opposite parties; virtual hearing; deemed admissibility of complaints if admissibility is not decided within 21 days of filing; provision of product liability; penal provisions for manufacture/sale of adulterated products/spurious goods; provision for making rules for prevention of unfair trade practice in e-commerce and direct selling etc.

e-dakhil portal has also been launched for online filing of consumer complaints. Besides physical hearing, video conferencing facility has also been provided at National and State level Consumer Commissions.

Section 38(7) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 prescribes that every complaint shall be disposed of 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.

(c) : Under sub-rule (2) of rule 18 of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011, no retail dealer or other person including manufacturer, packer, importer and wholesale dealer shall make any sale of any commodity in packed form at a price exceeding the retail sale price thereof. Further, penalty provisions are also made under rule 32 of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 for the contravention of these rules.
