

Government of India
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Department of Consumer Affairs

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 793
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2024

CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

793. SHRI M. BADRUDDIN AJMAL:

Will the Minister of **CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**
उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण राज्य मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that consumer rights which are guaranteed under the Consumer Protection Act are being violated widely in the country as adulterated fruits, vegetables and other essential commodities are being sold in the market openly, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures being taken by the Government to protect the rights of consumers;
- (c) the details of the arrangements available for consumers to lodge their complaints against violation of their rights and the process of action to resolve it; and
- (d) the details of the complaints against violation of consumer rights registered during the last five years and the ratio of action on such complaints?

ANSWER

उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण राज्य मंत्री
(श्री अश्विनी कुमार चौबे)

THE MINISTER OF STATE
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (c) : Department of Consumer Affairs is continuously working for consumer protection and empowerment of consumers by enactment of progressive legislations. 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protection in the new era of globalization, technologies, e-commerce markets etc Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act 2019 was enacted.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. The Consumer Commissions are empowered to give relief of a specific nature and award, wherever appropriate, compensation to consumers.

Salient features of the new Consumer Protection Act, 2019 are establishment of a Central Consumer Protection Authority(CCPA); simplification of the adjudication process in the Consumer Commissions such as enhancing pecuniary jurisdiction of the Consumer Commissions, filing of complaint from the Consumer Commission having jurisdiction over the place of work/residence of the consumer irrespective of the place of transaction, e-filing and e-payment, videoconferencing for 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.

A Consumer Commission online application portal named “edaakhil.nic.in” has been developed to facilitate the consumers/advocates to file consumer complaints online through the e-Daakhil portal from home or anywhere at their own comfort for speedy and hassle-free resolution of cases. E-daakhil has been implemented in 35 States/UTs of the Country.

Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has been established w.e.f 24.07.2020 to regulate matters relating to violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the interests of public and consumers and to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.

Section 90 and 91 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provide for punishment for manufacturing for sale or for storing or selling or for distributing or importing any product containing an adulterant or spurious goods, which includes imprisonment or fine depending on the extent of injury to the consumer.

The National Consumer Helpline(NCH) administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs has emerged as a single point of access to consumers across the country for grievance redressal at pre-litigation stage. Consumers can register their grievances from all over the country in 17 languages through a toll-free number 1915. These grievances can be registered on Integrated Grievance Redressal Mechanism (INGRAM), an omni channel IT enabled central portal, through various channels- Whats App, SMS , mail , NCH app, web portal, Umang app as per their convenience. Companies, who have voluntarily partnered with NCH, as part of the ‘Convergence’ programme directly respond to these grievances according to their redressal process, and revert by providing a feedback to the complainant on the portal directly. Complaints against those companies, who have not partnered with National Consumer Helpline, are forwarded to the company’s email id available on public domain for redressal.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) through State/UTs and its regional offices conduct regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection and random sampling of food products to check compliance of the standards laid down under Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 (FSS Act), Rules and Regulations made thereunder. In order to ensure safe food to everyone, Government initiates penal action against the defaulting Food Business Operators as per provisions of FSS Act, Rules and Regulations made thereunder.

In order to facilitate quick redressal of food concerns, FSSAI has an online food concern redressal system namely ‘Food Safety Connect’ that is part of the online Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS). This online platform helps consumers to register their complaints and feedbacks about food safety issues related to adulterated food, unsafe food, substandard food, labelling defects in food and misleading claims & advertisements related to various food products. On successful registration of a food concern, Consumer receives a unique concern no. via SMS on the mobile number provided at the time of registering the concern. This reference number can be utilized to monitor the status of their concern in the online system.

(d) : Details of cases filed in consumer commissions during last five years are as follows:

| Year | Cases Filed | Cases Disposed | Percentage of disposal |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2019 | 1,73,882 | 1,36,671 | 78.60 |
| 2020 | 1,16,802 | 57,090 | 48.88 |
| 2021 | 1,45,856 | 96,936 | 66.46 |
| 2022 | 1,69,979 | 1,77,979 | 104.71 |
| 2023 | 1,66,749 | 1,82,872 | 109.67 |
