

The needs of the National Commission are always on the priority agenda of the Government. : K.V. Thomas

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✘ INVC,, Delhi,, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Prof. K.V. Thomas has called for the effective functioning of Consumer Dispute Redressal Machinery in the country. Presiding over at the inaugural function of a Two day Conference of the Presidents, State Commissions and the Secretaries, Incharge, Consumer Affairs of the State Governments/UT Administrations here today the minister said , it is essential that Consumer Fora function successfully, retaining their character & effectiveness so that consumers do not lose their confidence in the justice delivery system. He said While the overall performance of the Consumer Fora may be satisfactory, as out of 35.09 lakh cases filed so far 31.46 lakh cases, nearly 89.68% stand disposed, the need of the hour is to ensure that the Consumer Fora do not slip onto the path of civil courts, making litigation long drawn out and taking several years to dispose of even cases involving small compensation. Detailing the Ministry initiatives the minister said that the needs of the National Commission are always on the priority agenda of the Government. In so far as the State Commissions and District Fora are concerned, as we have been continuously impressing upon them, the State Governments are again requested to make all efforts for providing the necessary infrastructure and manpower to the Fora so that the objectives of the Act are fulfilled. To reduce the pendency of cases thirteen cities across the country have been notified by the Govt. where NCDRC can hold Circuit Benches .The number of Members of the Commission has been increased from 5 to 9 enabling the Commission to set up 5 Benches. Further 2 additional posts of Members have been created for a period of five years for setting up an additional Bench to clear backlog of cases in NCDRC. He said the Government is implementing an important scheme CONFONET to make the Consumer Fora more efficient, transparent and systematic in their functioning. This project for Computerization & Computer Networking of Consumer Fora in the country is being executed on a turnkey basis by the National Informatics Centre. This project, approved at an estimated cost of Rs. 48.64 crores during 10th Plan for the entire country, has been extended to 11th Plan at a cost of Rs 25.69 crores. Under this scheme, the consumer fora at all the three tiers would be fully computerized and inter-connected enabling them to access information leading to quicker disposal of cases. With the implementation of this scheme consumers across the country will be able to file complaints online and can also find out the status of the case on the website. Out of 35 State Commissions and 607 District Fora, 34 State Commissions and 593 District Fora have been covered under this project so far. Similarly, we have another scheme titled 'Strengthening of Consumer Fora' where financial assistance is being extended to States/UTs to supplement their efforts in strengthening infrastructure of the Consumer Fora. An amount of Rs.10.30 crores have been released so far to 7 eligible States under this scheme during 2010-11.

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