



Department of Consumer Affairs conducts Chintan Shivir on “Amendment in the Consumer Protection Act, 2019” to review the consumer redressal framework and evolve an action plan for strengthening consumer justice

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The Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India, organized a “Chintan Shivir on Amendment in the Consumer Protection Act, 2019” today at Manak Bhawan, New Delhi. The deliberations on legislative & procedural reforms focused on strengthening the consumer protection framework and ensuring speedy and effective redressal of consumer grievances.

The event was graced by Hon’ble Justice Amreshwar Pratap Sahi, President, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC); Smt. Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs; Shri Bharat Khera, Additional Secretary; and Shri Anupam Mishra, Joint Secretary. In their addresses, they underscored the Government’s unwavering commitment to simplifying consumer grievance redressal mechanisms and reinforcing institutional frameworks for consumer justice.

Smt. Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, in her inaugural address highlighted that the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 sets clear timelines for case disposal three months for regular cases and five months for those requiring testing or analysis and urged that no case should remain pending beyond six months, reflecting the Government’s focus on timely consumer justice.

The Secretary further underlined the growing use of technology in consumer protection through initiatives such as Direct Benefit Transfer, e-filing, and digital grievance redressal, along with the E-Jagriti initiative, which has improved digital efficiency and transparency. She also highlighted India’s global recognition by UNCTAD for strengthening pre-litigation redressal through the National Consumer Helpline (1915), which resolves over 12 lakh complaints annually many within 21 days or less with more than 1,150 companies onboarded as partners and AI-based systems ensuring faster grievance resolution. Thus, highlighting the evolution of Consumer Protection Act of 1986 to more progressive and technology-based Consumer protection Act of 2019 which ensures speedy, hassle-free, and cost-effective justice that aligns with the pace of technological advancement.

Hon'ble Justice Amreshwar Pratap Sahi, President, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), emphasized the need for a structured and regular performance audit that not only check procedural compliance but also measure the actual impact of the law in delivering justice to consumers. He called for stronger institutional and technological support across consumer fora through NIC, highlighting the role of technology, including AI tools like ChatGPT. He stated that while such tools can enhance efficiency, human judgment, empathy, and understanding must remain at the core of justice delivery, with technology serving only as a supportive tool.

Shri Bharat Khera, Additional Secretary, highlighted the significant provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, describing it as a landmark step in safeguarding consumer rights and promoting fair trade practices. The Act aims to empower consumers through greater transparency, accountability, and accessibility to justice. Speedy, cost-effective, and technology-driven redressal of consumer grievances under the proposed amendments is ensured with the help of real-time case tracking, virtual hearings, digital submissions, and paperless proceedings through integrated e-filing and e-record management systems.

Shri Anupam Mishra, Joint Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, highlighted initiatives such as e-JAGRITI for digital filing and virtual hearings, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) based tools for case management and predictive analysis, and Bhashini-enabled multilingual access to make the system more efficient and inclusive. He also stressed the need to rationalize District Commissions, fill vacancies, and strengthen infrastructure to ensure timely and effective delivery of consumer justice.

The Chintan Shivir discussed proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 to ensure faster case disposal and reduce pendency. Key focus areas included strict timelines, digital transformation through e-JAGRITI, and the use of AI and ML for efficient drafting and case management. The sessions also stressed strengthening District Consumer Commissions, filling vacancies, and improving infrastructure. The discussions reaffirmed the Department's commitment to a citizen-centric, technology-driven, and time-bound grievance redressal system, aligned with the Government's vision of Ease of Living and Digital Governance.

The Chintan Shivir witnessed active participation from a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including representatives from State Governments, Presidents and Members of State and District Consumer Commissions, Voluntary Consumer Organisations (VCOs) such as Citizen Consumer & Civic Action Group (CAG) and Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, National Law Universities from Delhi, Ranchi, Puducherry, and Patiala, and leading industry associations such as FICCI, CII, RAI, and ASSOCHAM. Representatives from prominent law firms including Dua Associates, Ikigai Law, Jaitley & Bakhshi, and Nishith Desai Associates also contributed to the discussions, offering valuable legal, academic, and industry insights.

RT/ARC

