

# VIDYA BHAWAN BALIKA VIDYA PITH

## शक्ति उत्थान आश्रम लखीसराय बिहार

Class 12 commerce Sub. BST. Date 05.01.2021

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### CONSUMER PROTECTION

*Question 1:*

Now, filing complaint is just a click away. Filing a complaint in a consumer court's going to get a lot easier by the end of this year, virtually. No matter which part of the country you're in, it's going to happen at the click of a mouse.

The project, called Confonet (Computerisation and Computer Networking of Consumer Fora), is being executed on a turnkey basis by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

"Online registration of complaints, the government hopes, will promote e-governance, transparency, efficiency and streamlining of consumer fora," said an official in the consumer affairs ministry. Of Rs 48.64 crore set aside for the project, the government has released Rs 30.56 crore so far, the official added.

"Besides software development and testing, networking and project implementation, integration and site preparation, it will include purchase of hardware for all the 600 district fora, 35 state commissions and the National Commission," the official said.

At present, computer systems and system software have been delivered to 25 state commissions and 300 district fora – never mind the fact that it's sometimes a long wait before the hardware is finally unpacked and set up in some of the districts. Meanwhile, training of staff, sometimes in the classroom and sometimes through e-learning sessions, are in full swing.

"But just setting up an online complaint filing system won't ensure a strong consumer protection movement in the country – for that we're working on GenNext and the best way to do that is to go to schools," the official said.

The government is, therefore, involving school children to form consumer clubs so as to involve them in various consumer welfare activities.

Part of the funding for running the club is to come from various state governments, with an equally matching grant from the Centre. However, a number of state governments are yet to sanction the fund — some of these include Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala.

## Questions

1. What new measures is the ministry of consumer affairs taking to make filing of complaint easy?
2. What role can you, as a student, play to contribute to the cause of consumer protection?
3. What scenario of consumer protection do you foresee when the measures proposed in the above news report are implemented?

## ANSWER:

1. One of the measures taken to make filing of complaints easy is the initiation of online registration of complaints.
2. As a student, the following steps can be taken.
  - i. Organise workshops with regard to consumer rights and responsibilities.
  - ii. Organise street plays in order to spread consumer awareness.
  - iii. Check for adulteration in goods (in school laboratories with the help of the teacher).
  - iv. Work voluntary with a neighbourhood consumer organisation.
3. The initiation of online registration would definitely ease the process of filing of complaints. However, such a system is not beneficial for those consumers who are not tech-savvy or are uneducated. In this regard, it must be ensured that the District Forum, State Commission and National Commission must also work efficiently and simultaneously to the system of online registration.