

AN APPEAL

Consumer Protection Council, Rourkela, came into existence as a natural means to safeguard consumer interests, in September 1985, after its initial success in resolving "Indane" refill supply crisis.

In its nearly 3 decades of dedicated service to the Indian consumer, apart from thousands of individuals who have gained by its intervention, whether it be through counseling or through complaint handling, crores have been enjoying fruits of its efforts through its Advocacy and Public Interest Cases filed before the Consumer Courts, especially before the NCDRC, New Delhi.

The last major initiative of the Council, before the National Commission, resulted in automation of 186 LPG Bottling Plants, of the three Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies, which supply cooking gas refills to crores of housewives across the country. Incidentally, the Order of the National Commission, passed in 2007, was silent on the Council's prayers to invoke provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, and to impose penalty on Indian Oil Corporation, which had sold Rs. 65,000/- crores worth of under-filled LPG refills to unsuspecting housewives. As for records, the Council did not even get the cost of litigation.

Considering that the issues involved were too important, which had the potential to transform the consumer movement, the Council appealed to the Supreme Court in September 2010.

While the Consumer Protection Act, enacted by the Parliament, mandated imposition of penalties, not less than 5% of the defective goods sold or deficient services rendered, necessitating IOC to pay a minimum of Rs. 3,250 crores as penalty, in addition to paying "punitive damages" and adequate costs, the Supreme Court, simply turned blind to these provisions and said that the Council's appeal was 'infructuous'. The Council's appeal for Review was also discarded by the Supreme Court, in Feb. 2013.

In our 25 years of exposure before the consumer courts and other judicial machinery, we have never witnessed such gross violation of the law, even by a District Forum. Hence, we propose to file a Curative Petition before the Supreme Court and also propose to advertise in the media to seek public attention. All this involve good amount of money.

As mandated by the General Body of the Council, in 2008, Sri B.Vaidyanathan, Chief Mentor, has been representing the Council and incurring the expenses. As on date, he has already spent over Rs. 3 lakhs, from his own resources. We need to rise to the occasion and do our bit and help in taking the matter to its logical end.

We solicit all the public minded citizens of this country to come forward and contribute whatever you can. Donations through cheque or DD, may be sent in favour of "Consumer Protection Council, Rourkela".

Donations can also be directly remitted in the Bank account of the Chief Mentor: B.VAIDYANATHAN (CHIEF MENTOR), INDIAN BANK, Nanganallur, Chennai, A/c No. 778323845, IFSC: IDIB000N079, CBS Code: 01377. In case of Bank Transfer made to the Chief Mentor, please Email the details of transfer to vaidya@advantageconsumer.com.

ALL DONATIONS WILL BE THANKFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

**B.Pradhan, Secretary
Consumer Protection Council, Rourkela
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