CHAPTER IV

ORGANISATION OF THE CONSUMER DISPUTES

REDRESSAL AGENCIES

Administration envisages accomplishment of a task through collective efforts. Such efforts need proper arrangement ‘inter-se’ in such a way that each participant has a specific responsibility to discharge and his responsibility is linked with the rest of the members of the organisation and ultimately with the objectives to be achieved. Organisations are social units (or human groups) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals. Organisations refer to planned units deliberately structured for the purpose of attaining specific goals. Thus, the arrangement or plan of collective efforts of different inputs is called organisation. There can be no administration, no achievement of goals and objectives unless there is organisation to run it. The members of the organisation must have clarity of their authority, responsibility, relationships in such a way that their co-operative energies are directed towards the same end. This is possible if there exists an organisational structure.

The classical view holds that lack of design in organisation is illogical, cruel, wasteful and inefficient. It is illogical because good designs or planning must come first, it is cruel because the individuals who work suffer from a lack of design in organisation. It is wasteful because unless jobs are clearly put together along the line of

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functional specialization, it is impossible to train men to succeed to positions as the incumbents are promoted, resign or retire. And it is inefficient because unless based on principles, management - will be based on personality, with the resultant rise of company politics.\(^4\) Organisation is the medium through which individuals work as a group as effectively as each would work alone. It consists of the relationship of individuals to individuals and of groups to groups, which are so related as to bring about an orderly division of labour.\(^5\) Organisation is a universal phenomenon found wherever two or more people are associated in doing something.

Modern civilization depends largely on organisations as the most rational and efficient form of social grouping. It creates a powerful social tool by coordinating a large number of human actions. It combines its personnel with its resources, weaving together leaders, experts, workers, machines, and raw materials. At the same time it continually evaluates how well it is performing and tries to adjust itself accordingly in order to achieve its goals.

The organisation is an arrangement of individuals or groups into a coherent whole, with a complex of functional inter-relationships and a system of overall administration.\(^6\) The goals of which serve many functions. They provide orientation by depicting a future state of affairs which the organisation strives to realize. Thus, they set down guidelines for organisational activity. Goals also constitute a source of

\(^6\) Encyclopaedia Britannica. Volume III. Ed. 1768: 578.
legitimacy which justifies the activities of an organisation and, indeed, its very existence.\textsuperscript{7}

In the laissez faire state, justice, like any other commodity was to be purchased by those who had the means to pay its cost. The factors like differences among potential litigants in practical access to the system or the availability of litigating resources were not perceived as problems. In striking contrast to this individualistic approach, modern state shows an increased awareness of the need to make justice effective, by securing access to all sections of the community to the legal machinery for vindicating legal rights and settling disputes.\textsuperscript{8} The organisation of such a machinery provided by the legal system postulates the existence of legislation imposing some obligations on the manufacturer and traders and at the same time conferring some rights on the consumer.

In a welfare state, it is the responsibility of the state to safeguard the interests of the consumers. The participation of the state in economic life, has been one of the regular features from the earliest days. In recent times, an increase is witnessed in participation of the state in regard to both its coverage and intensity. Therefore, law has to play a prominent role as a means of social engineering in constructing a mutually beneficial framework of relations between the producer, seller and the customer. As in other parts of the world, in India too, the Consumer Protection Act was formulated in the year 1986 wherein protection is provided to the consumers. An elaborate organisation has been developed in order to implement the objectives

\textsuperscript{7} Amitai Etzioni. Modern Organisations. op.cit., 3.
of the Act. In this Chapter we highlight the organisational set up at three levels, National, State and District. Though set in hierarchical order, each one of these units has an autonomous role to play. We also dwell upon the organisational goals as perceived by the officials of the State Commission and the District Forum.

Establishment Of The Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies Under The Act

The Consumer Protection Act received the assent of the Parliament of India on 24th December 1986. Until the year 1988, only 30 districts had set up District Forum at the District level and State Commission at the State level. In the case of Chandigarh no measures were taken up until then. The unconcerned attitude on the part of the Union of India forced the public interest litigation to move a petition in the Supreme Court of India. Following this, the Supreme Court issued directions that the States had not bothered to constitute District Forums and if they did, used it to provide as rehabilitation opportunities to members affiliated to the State ruling parties. In spite of this indication, the respective State Governments failed to comply with the directions of the Supreme Court of India. The lukewarm attitude on the part of the bureaucracy in India in such public interest litigation cases can be summed up in the words of Justice P.N. Bhagwati, the retired Chief Justice of India who was

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9 For Objectives- Refer to Chapter no.2.
10 Common Cause in 1988 through its Director H.D.Shourie.
one of the major architects of public interest litigation.13

"This is because the orders are not palatable to the government. More often the junior officers in charge of implementation are not really sympathetic to the poor and disadvantaged for whose benefit the orders are made."*

One of the major purposes of the Act was to overcome such situations which the common man had no efficacious medium for redressal of his grievances. But the final outcome of this public interest litigation case was of significant consequence. It is interesting to point out that after the Chief Secretaries of the erring State Governments had personally tendered appearance in the contempt proceedings before the Supreme Court of India, notifications regarding the establishment of District Forum and State Commissions were issued within a record period of two months, something which ought to have been done five years back. Thus, the public interest litigation petition and the contempt proceedings were disposed of by the judges.

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13 The Chandigarh State Commission was established on July 1988 and started functioning on 1.4.89. The Harayana State Commission was established on 28.4.89 and started working effectively from 1.7.89. The Panjab State Commission was established on 30.4.89 and started judicial work from 7.1.90.

* Common Cause Vs. Union of India . JT 1993 (1) SC 67.
Organisational Structure of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies

A sound organisational structure is a pre-requisite to sound management. It is highly desirable, therefore, that a good deal of care and vision is shown in determining the structure of the organisation.  

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A wrong structure will seriously impair the performance and may even destroy it. Organisational Structure must be designed so as to make possible the attainment of the objectives for a long period. However, a good structure does not by itself bring about good performance, just as a good constitution does not by itself guarantee good government. On the other hand a poor structure makes good performance impossible.\textsuperscript{15}

An organisational structure is made up of a network of positions arranged in a hierarchical order with defined authority and responsibility. To be more specific, it establishes a pattern of relationships among the various components of the organisation. It sets up the framework for developing a communication channel by which the manager can coordinate, direct and control the activities of an operation achieving the desired goals and objectives.

To look into the disputes of the consumers, the National Commission is at the apex i.e. at the Central level, the State Commission at the State level and the District Forum at the district level.

**Organisation At The National Level: Central Consumer Protection Council**

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 provides for setting up the Consumer Protection Councils\textsuperscript{16} at the Central and State level along


\textsuperscript{16} The Central Consumer Protection Council, the apex body in consumer affairs, at its meeting held on 25th January 1984, at New Delhi mooted citizens’ charter to raise the standard of public utility services. The citizen’s charter is a certification mark of ‘excellence’ or ‘standard’ having been achieved by the organisation. Any establishment that feels that it has achieved excellence and has come up to the norm prescribed under the charter can apply for citizen’s charter.
with the National Commission and the State Commission. The main objective is to protect the rights of the consumers. These councils act as catalyst or change so that the present market system functions for the welfare of the consumers and for satisfying their needs rather than being subservient to the interest of the industrialists and monopolists.

**Legal Framework Of The Central Council**

Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 the Central Council consists of the following members:-

a) the Minister-in-charge of Consumer Affairs.\(^{17}\)

b) the Minister of State (where he is not holding independent charge).\(^ {18}\)

c) the Minister of Food and Civil Supplies or Minister-in-charge of Consumer Affairs in States.

d) Eight members of Parliament-five from the Lok Sabha and three from the Rajya Sabha.

e) the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.\(^ {19}\)

f) representatives of the Central Government Departments and autonomous organisations concerned with consumer interests not exceeding twenty.

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\(^{18}\) Substituted by G.SR. 800 (1) W.E.F. 31-12-1993.

\(^{19}\) Substituted by G.SR. 800 (1) W.E.F. 31-12-1993.
g) representatives of the Consumer Organisations or consumers not less than thirty five.

h) representatives of women-not less than ten.

i) representatives of farmers, trade and industries not exceeding twenty.

j) persons capable of representing consumer interest not exceeding fifteen.

k) the Secretary in the Department of Civil Supplies.

The Minister-in-charge of Consumer Affairs in the Central Government is the Chairman of the Central Council and the Secretary in the Department is the member-Secretary of the Central Council while the Minister of State (where he is not holding independent charge) or Deputy Minister is the Vice-chairman of the Council. It consists of 150 members as prescribed in the Act.

The Central Council has constituted a Working Group from amongst its members. Its findings are placed before the Council for consideration. The resolution by the Council is recommendatory in nature. The main recommendations of the working group were:-

1. Collection of Rupee per ration card by its State Governments for consumer welfare activity who were above the poverty line.

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20 The Central Government notified on June 1, 1987 the contribution of the Central Council consisting of 116 members but now the total strength has been raised to 150 members.

21 The Central Government has constituted a Working Group on January 7, 1991 to suggest suitable amendments to the Consumer Protection Act and the MRTP Act.

22 Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the Meetings of the Standing Working Group of CCPC held on 20th - 29th April 1998.
2. Creation of Alternate Disputes Redressal System.

3. Creation of Financial Assistance Scheme by the State Governments.

4. Introduction and implementation of Citizens Charter by State Government/ UT's in Departments having large public interface to provide Justice to the consumers.

5. Inclusion of four State representatives on the working group on regional and rational basis for a one year period.

The investigator went through the main recommendations and the action taken on them. It was found that the Department of Food and Civil Supplies did not accept the first proposal on the ground that it may result in harassment/difficulties to the ration cardholder. The second was rejected on the basis that there was no provision to set up the system under the Consumer Protection Act. The third and the fourth were postponed to the next meeting to elicit the views of the members on the subject. The last proposal could not be implemented, as according to the existing provision of the Consumer Protection Act and Rules no person other than a member of the Council can be included in the working group.

The main function of the Central Council having a wide base and multi-sectional representation is to create consumer awareness and develop a widespread, responsive and responsible consumer movement in the country.

The Central Council is constituted every three years. However, there is no provision either under the Act or the Consumer Protection Rules, 1987 as to the renewal of the term of the Council. Then, if any member wishes to resign from the council he can give his resignation.
in writing to the Chairman of the Central Council. But the vacancies so caused are filled from the same category by the Central Government and that person holds office so long as the member whose place he filled would have been entitled to hold office if the vacancy had not occurred.

Moreover, the Chairman of the Central Council calls for a meeting and time and place is fixed. At least one meeting is called every year but it is entitled to hold as many meetings as it deems necessary. A notice in writing with a gap of 10 days is sent to the members prescribing the place and day and hour of the meeting. It consists of the statement of business to be transacted in that meeting. The meeting of the Central Council is presided over by the Chairman of the Council. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman takes over the Council. However, in the absence of both the chairman and the Vice-Chairman, the Central Council elects a member to preside over the meeting of the Council. Any resolution in the meeting is passed by simple majority but the resolution so passed is recommendatory in nature and has no binding upon the authorities concerned with the enforcement of the provisions of the Act. However, the decisions of the Council do have persuasive value.

23 Prior to the 1993 Amendment, the Central Council was required to have at least three meetings in a year. The Central Council being a big body, it was very expensive and difficult to conduct three meetings in a year. Therefore, to overcome this difficulty, the amendment was made to hold one meeting in a year.
The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

Under the provisions of the Act, the National Commission is at the apex of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies and it enjoys original, appellate and revisional jurisdictions over whole of India.

The National Commission consists of a President, who is a Judge of the Supreme Court and four other members (one of them is a woman). *

Though the original Act did not provide any detailed guidelines concerning the selection of judicial and non-judicial members except that no sitting Judge of the Supreme Court could be appointed except after consultation with the Chief Justice of that Court. However, significant changes have been incorporated under the Amendment Act of 1993. The whole procedure concerning the appointment of the members of the National Commission, has been modified. A provision has been inserted wherein it has been made obligatory on the part of the government to consult the Chief Justice of India before making any appointment of the President of the Commission.

As regards the appointment of the non judicial members of the National Commission, every appointment is made by the Central Government on the recommendations of a selection committee.

Powers Of The National Commission

-To issue cease and desist orders so as to restrain the malpractices of traders / hoarders / manufacturers.

* For details, refer to Chapter 5.
-To grant interim injunction for providing temporary relief to the complainants seeking justice.  

-To give directions for recall of defective or unsafe products and replacement of defective products or for removal of deficiency in service.

These powers ensure the manufacturers, distributors and importers to comply with the safety provisions and to pay compensation for injuries caused due to defect in a product or deficiency in service. The National Commission enjoys jurisdiction to entertain complaints where the value of the goods or services and the compensation claimed exceeds rupees twenty lakhs. It can entertain appeals against the orders of any State Commission and call for the records and pass appropriate orders in any consumer dispute which is pending before it. Also, if it has been decided by any State Commission where it appears to the National Commission that such State Commission has exercised a jurisdiction not vested in it by law or has failed to exercise a jurisdiction so vested.

**Organisation At The State Level : State Consumer Protection Council**

Similar to the Central Consumer Protection Council there are State Consumer Protection Councils in every State. These Councils are required to provide the consumer the right to be heard and to be

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24 In the case of District Manager, Telephone v. Munilal Brij Mohan (Revision Petition No. 78 of 1992), the National Commission held that the Consumer Protection Act has not conferred any power on the Redressal Forums constituted under it to pass interim orders by way of injunction etc. pending original proceedings instituted before the forum. The above view of the National Commission was confirmed by the Supreme Court in Morgan Stanley case.

assured that his interests will receive due consideration at appropriate forums besides giving consumers the right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices and exploitation.

The State Council consists of a Minister incharge of Consumer Affairs in the State Government who is the Chairman and other official and non-official members representing various interests. The number of members is prescribed by the State Government, therefore, it can vary from state to state. It can meet as and when necessary but not less than two meetings should be held every year. The procedure to be observed in regard to the transaction of its business at such meetings as prescribed by the State Government, itself. The Act in its amended version of 1993 provides for the Union Territory administration to set up a State Consumer Protection Council. However, in the present situation the Chandigarh Consumer Protection Council is non-functional. It is suggested that the State Consumer Protection Council should be reactivated by the State Governments and if need be the Courts can intervene to make sure that State Governments take a step forward to set up these Councils in their respective states.

It should be ensured that they meet regularly. Consumer Protection Committees if set up at village levels adjoining Chandigarh to hear complaints and also to act as agents of consumers can be a great help to consumers. Similarly, revenue and panchayat officers can be given powers to hear consumer complaints in order to reduce the burden on the redressal forums. This view has also been supported by the Central Consumer Protection Council.26

26 CCPC at a meeting held on 31-5-97 at New Delhi.
State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

Next to the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission is the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 provides for the setting up of State Consumer Redressal Commissions in each State and Union Territory. Although the Act was passed in 1986, yet they were never constituted until late 1988. However, in Chandigarh after great effort the State Commission was set up in 1989. The State Commission consists of a President and two members. The President of the Commission is a Judge of a High Court. Two other members, having adequate knowledge and experience are appointed as members and one of them is a woman. However, the appointment of the President is made only after consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court. Every appointment is made by the State Government on the recommendation of a Selection Committee for five years.*

Jurisdiction Of The State Commission

The State Commission can entertain complaints where the nature of the goods or services and the compensation, claimed exceeds rupees five lakhs but does not exceed rupees twenty lakhs. The State Commission also has the jurisdiction to entertain appeals against the orders of any District Forum within the State. It can call for the records and pass appropriate orders in any consumer dispute which is pending before or has been decided by any District Forum within the State if it appears to it that such District Forum has exercised a power rightfully vested in it by law or has acted illegally or with material irregularity. Hence, like the National Commission the

* For details refer to Chapter 5.
State Commissions' jurisdiction also is original, appellate or revisional. However, the State Commission can reverse the orders passed by the District Forum on any question of fact or law made by the Forum.27

In respect of the original jurisdiction of the State Commission no territorial limits have been fixed under the Act though the provision contained in Section II(2) of the Act apply to the matters of entertaining original complaints by the State Commission. The jurisdiction of the State Commission therefore extends to the territorial limits of the State.

In the exercise of its appellate jurisdiction, the State Commission can entertain appeals only against the orders of any District Forum within the state. Similar condition also applies in respect of the State Commission's power to revise orders of the District Forums, only orders of the District Forum within the State are subject to revision by the State Commission.28 In view of the increasing ambit of the redressal agencies, it is suggested that the pecuniary jurisdiction of the redressal agencies should be increased so that wider coverage is given to consumers.

28 In the case of Vijinder Singh v. Shri D.S. Panwar, Advocate (First Appeal No. 588 of 1993), the complainant made a payment of Rs. 5,000 to the appellant in response to an advertisement made by him inviting application for the allotment of residential plots in Mohali. Since no such plot was allotted by the appellant and no residential plot was in fact there to be allotted, the complainant had been cheated. Learned District Forum finding merit in the complaint, accepted the same and directed the refund of earnest money of Rs. 5,000 to the complainant. However, the principle argument raised by the learned Council for the appellant was that it was a breach of contract for the sale and purchase of immovable property and not a case of buying any goods for consideration or for hiring any services for consideration. The State Commission after hearing both the parties held that they found merit in the submission made by the learned Council for the appellant. On the face of it, the controversy arises out of the breach of contract by the vendor and the claim for the refund of the earnest money. Obviously, such a dispute is not within the jurisdiction of the Consumer Protection Act. The complainant instead of filing the complaint before the learned District Forum should have taken recourse to the Civil Courts.
Organisation At The District Level

The Act provides for the establishment of a District Forum by the State Government in each district of the State. The State Government can establish more than one District Forum in a district. As in the case of Chandigarh, the first District Forum was constituted in 1989 but due to an enormous increase in the number of cases another District Forum was set up in 1994. The District Forum consists of a District Judge who is its President and two other members in which one of them is a woman.* Appointments to the District Forum are made by the State Government on the recommendation of the Selection Committee.

Jurisdiction Of The District Forum

Jurisdiction means the extent of the authority to administer justice not only with reference to the subject matter of suit but also to the territorial and pecuniary limits. The District Forum entertains complainants where the value of the goods or the services and the compensation, claimed is not more than rupees five lakhs. The pecuniary jurisdiction depends upon the amount of relief claimed and not upon the value of the subject matter, nor upon the relief allowed by the Forum. Moreover, the complaint so instituted in the District Forum should be within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the

* For details refer to Chapter 5.
29 In the case of Dynavox Electronics Pvt. Ltd. V. B.J.S. Rampuria Jain (Appeal No. 4 of 1989), it was held that where in a contract, the machinery was supplied and installed at a particular place, a part of cause of action would deemed to have arisen at that place, therefore, the complaint could be instituted in the District Forum within whose jurisdiction that place falls.
opposite party at the time of institution of the complaint actually resides.30

ORGANISATIONAL GOALS

The Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies have grown in size and activities since 1986 the year of its inception. The effectiveness of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies can be determined by the degree in which it realizes its goals through its organisational structure. It is therefore, essential that first of all the goals or objectives, which the organisation and its leaders wish to attain, be identified.31 It is only in the light of these goals that we can make any evaluation because it has been rightly suggested that the goals provide the best single clue to the distinctive character of an organisation. It is, however, necessary to determine what factors constitute the goals or objectives.

Organisational Goals, A Theoretical Perspective

Since the turn of this century, both social scientists and organisational theorists have attempted either vigorously or just referred to the concept of “goals” but inspite of various claims that considerable research work had been conducted, during a few recent decades, the subject of ‘goal concept ‘appears to have gone unnoticed. This significant omission in the theoretical literature was visualized and it was pointed out that it seemed to be taken for

granted in most studies, and yet what the goal or goals of a particular organisation are is an empirical matter and needs to be discovered.\(^{32}\)

During the last three decades attempts have been made in this direction and a whole body of literature has emerged, which is aimed at both clarifying and defining the concept of 'organisational goal'. It has been tried to define the term as a kind of output the organisation produces and offers to its environment.\(^{33}\) A common goal or purpose gives the organisation focus and its member a rallying point.\(^{34}\) The term 'organisational goal has also been defined as a desired state of affairs which the organisation attempts to realise,\(^{35}\) but, this view point was not accepted by all as to the behaviourists, the concept of goal has no utility.\(^{36}\) It is opined that in order to understand why people do the things and why they do in the organisation, one must take into account a whole host of goals.\(^{37}\) An attempt has been made to distinguish six categories of goals, which have external and internal referents. External referents are society, the public in contact with the organisation and the investors. They have been levelled as societal, output and investor goals. Internal referents are the organisation and its members, and named as system goals. Later on his new classification recognised five types of goals.\(^{38}\)


\(^{35}\) Amitai Etzioni, op.cit., 67.


An analysis of the body of literature clearly indicates that the controversy about the definition and classification of goals is still going on. However, classification of goals seemed to have some approval but most of the scholars have given two types of goals.\footnote{The output goals are those which the organisation produces or distributes to persons or system outside of itself. Non-output or support goals refer to conditions or activities for maintenance of the organisation itself.}

After providing a theoretical perspective of organisational goals, the goals of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies and its structure are being discussed in the following pages.

**Goals Perceived**

The Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies were constituted with the main objective of protecting an aggrieved consumer who could be in a position to seek redressal before these agencies especially those disputes where the consumer is exploited by the trader for using unfair trade practices. Therefore, measures were taken to protect the consumer against marketing of goods and services that are hazardous to life and property. Moreover steps were taken to inform the consumer about the quality, purity, standard and price of goods and their access to a variety of goods and services at competitive price available to them.

Another significant objective is that it assures that the consumers' interest would receive due consideration through the simple and inexpensive procedure followed by these redressal agencies. In short, the consumers would be educated and made aware to protect their rights and get their interests represented through these redressal agencies.
From the preceding paragraph, two main objectives come to light, firstly, to protect and promote the consumers interest against the malpractices of traders and manufacturers and secondly, the institution of a three tier remedial machinery for inexpensive and expeditious redressal of consumer grievances by way of an alternative to the ordinary process of instituting action before Civil Court with all its attendant heavy cost and enormous delay.

In the light of the above stated objectives, this investigator has studied the organisation of the State Commission and District Forum. Infact, a better understanding of the goals of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies can be had if we try to understand the perceptions of goals as seen by its employees. An understanding of the employees perceptions of their organisational goals provides a significant entry point for an investigator to monitor some aspects of the general functioning of the State Commission and the District Forum.

To be more specific, the intention was to lay bare the perceptions of a group of legal and non-legal respondents regarding goals of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies and also to see how far their perceptions were in harmony with or at variance with each other. Thus, to know the perceptions of the organisation’s goals a questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents wherein 15 items were perceived as goals of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies as indicated in Table 4.1 clearly demonstrating that there is considerable variation with regard to the perceptions of goals.

Employees includes all serving, non-serving Presidents, members and officials.

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TABLE 4.1

ORGANISATIONAL GOALS AS PERCEIVED BY RESPONDENTS OF CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL AGENCIES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals Perceived by the respondents</th>
<th>Priorities Expressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To decide disputes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protect the interest of consumers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speedy disposal of cases</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compensate consumers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impartial and fair judgement</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers can seek remedy to grievances</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non- participation of lawyers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stop sellers from exploiting the consumers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execution of decisions by the Redressal Agencies</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair selection of members</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non- technical procedure</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexpensive way to get justice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep a check over the services</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To promote ethics</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make consumers aware of their rights</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A stratification of the data reveals that as many as 15 items have been perceived as 'goals' but a point arises: Are all the
perceptions of the respondents actually the ‘goals’ of the organisation under investigation? Indeed, a close examination of these perceptions reveals that most of these items cannot be considered as goals. Infact, they are either individual activities,\textsuperscript{40} tasks or broad strategies / programmes undertaken by the respondents of the organisation as a whole towards the attainment of the goals.\textsuperscript{41} The above table demonstrates that to decide disputes (50.1 per cent), protecting the interest of Consumers (47.1 per cent), speedy disposal of cases (44.1 per cent), to compensate consumers (41 per cent), impartial and fair judgement (37.1 per cent), consumers can seek remedy to grievances (35 per cent) emerge as the main goals of the State Commission and the District Forum.

Similarly, non-participation of lawyers dominated the thinking of as many as 25 per cent and at the same time goals like stopping sellers from exploiting the consumers were expressed by 19 per cent of respondents. To get the decisions executed had the support of 17 per cent respondents and fair selection of members came from 14 per cent. For the remaining perceptions like inexpensive way to get justice was expressed by 12 per cent and keeping a check over the services by 10 per cent whereas making consumers aware of their rights was supported by only 4 per cent.

On examining the goals perceived in terms of priorities it is interesting to note that the respondents showed difference in their preferences.

\textsuperscript{40} Activity establishes what work is done and what needs to be done if organisation is to achieve its goals or objectives.

\textsuperscript{41} The data was fairly controlled in the sense that respondents were interviewed personally by the investigator and the replies were called for spontaneously with the object to eliminate the possibility of influences resulting from mutual consultations.
### TABLE 4.2

**MAJOR GOALS PERCEIVED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals perceived up to 6 positions</th>
<th>Overall percentage response and rating</th>
<th>Goals perceived of 1st priority &amp; rating</th>
<th>Change in rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To decide disputes</td>
<td>50 1st</td>
<td>33 1st</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protect the interest of consumer</td>
<td>47 2nd</td>
<td>9 5th</td>
<td>Slipped from 2nd to 5th position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speedy disposal of cases</td>
<td>44 3rd</td>
<td>10 4th</td>
<td>Slipped from 3rd to 4th position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compensate consumers</td>
<td>41 4th</td>
<td>11 3rd</td>
<td>Moved from 4th to 3rd position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impartial and fair judgement</td>
<td>37 5th</td>
<td>13 2nd</td>
<td>Moved from 5th to 2nd position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers can seek remedy to grievances</td>
<td>35 6th</td>
<td>8 6th</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of the above Table reveals that a considerable variation exists between the priorities and the percentage response. For instance, to decide disputes was the first major goal perceived by the respondents without any change in the rating. To protect the interest of consumers was the 2nd major goal at 47 per cent but it was the fifth priority amongst the respondents. To follow summary procedure or speedy disposal of cases was supported by 44 per cent of respondents which slipped to the 4th position and instead
compensating the consumers moved to the 3rd position. Impartial and fair judgement was otherwise the 5th major goal but priority wise it was 2nd among the respondents and no change was observed in the 6th major goal for seeking remedy to grievances.

Satisfaction With The Resources

The respondents of the State Commission and the District Forum were asked to express their sense of satisfaction with regard to the resources\textsuperscript{42} placed at their disposal for the attainment of the goals. The response shown by them has been tabulated below :-

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|}
\hline
Satisfaction with the Resources & Percentage \\
\hline
Highly satisfied & 9.62 \\
\hline
Fairly well satisfied & 27.50 \\
\hline
Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied & 12.50 \\
\hline
Fairly dissatisfied & 15.38 \\
\hline
Highly dissatisfied & 35.00 \\
\hline
Nothing to say & - \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{RESPONDENTS SATISFACTION WITH REGARD TO RESOURCES}
\end{table}

Regarding factors other than resources hindering achievement of goals of Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies, there does not

\textsuperscript{42} Resources include finance, infrastructure, staff, library, stationary etc.
seem to be any single factor responsible for hindering the achievement of goals, as was revealed from the response of the respondents. As many as 12 factors have been listed out of these political interference, indiscipline and lack of commitment were decidedly the most serious obstruction as per opinion expressed by 62 per cent of respondents respectively. However, corruption and lack of promotional avenues were mentioned by 55 per cent of the officials. Similarly absence of competent people, discrimination, lack of implementation and lack of coordination was expressed by 48 per cent. Lack of clarity of role and absence or definite standard/ yardstick for work of each category of employees are the possible factors affecting the goal attainment.

It is observed that out of the total number of 50 officials a little more than one fourth (27.50 per cent) were fairly satisfied with the resources at their disposal. While more than one third (35 per cent) of the employees were highly dissatisfied. Moreover very few (9.62 per cent) were highly satisfied consisting mainly the bench members. More than 12 per cent stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the resources available and 15.38 per cent were fairly dissatisfied with resources available to them.

* Based on informal interview with the respondents on 6.12.1997.
Commitment To Organisational Goals

The degree of commitment visualized by the officers in respect of their subordinates and superiors has been shown in table below:-

**TABLE 4.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment of Subordinates</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment of Subordinates</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment of Superiors</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of the above Table brings out that half (50 per cent) of the respondents presented an average show for the commitment of their subordinates, out of which 34 per cent rated it as fair and 16 per cent rated it as average. In contrast to the above feeling 57 per cent of the officers were satisfied with the commitment of their superiors out of which 34 per cent rated it as good and 23 per cent rated it as excellent.

Another feature of this analysis is that 43 per cent respondents feel that their superiors had either average or fair commitment. It is expected of the superiors holding the authority to provide leadership and guide the subordinates in the attainment of goals but, if they themselves lack commitment, the redressal agencies cannot be expected to work effectively and efficiently.

The preceding discussions lead to the following observations :-

A fairly large percentage of respondents are not clear about the goals of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies. They seem to regard their
day to day functions or activities as 'goals' of their organisation and there is clear evidence of the helplessness of member in achieving the goals of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies on account of political interference, indiscipline, corruption, lack of promotional avenues and lack of commitment. It is quite significant to note that the commitment to goals cannot be brought about forcibly. It can only arise out of the interaction of the employees with the quality of environment surrounding the work situation, but the quality of environment does not seem to exist as revealed by a large number of respondents. However, the main question is whether those at the implementation level of the system perceive the goals. If they do not, then urgent attention should be paid to the indoctrination of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agency's personnel at all levels regarding goals. The study clearly visualises that once the goals are clarified, arranged in order, and understood and internalized, there is every possibility to bring about considerable change in the organisational behaviour of the officers with a view to facilitating the attainment of organisational goals.

There is no doubt that every organisation has specific objective and goals to be achieved but what is more important is that the goals of the organisation should be clearly laid out. Further, to protect the interest of consumers, a three tier machinery at the National, State and District level has been set up for the redressal of grievances of the consumers. The Consumer Councils have been set up to educate the consumer regarding his rights. The consumer can lodge a complaint in the District Forum if the amount does not exceed Rupees 5 lakhs and to the State Commission if the amount does not exceed Rupees 20 lakhs and in case the amount exceed Rupees 20 lakhs he has to go to the National Commission.