

Need for Global Cooperation To Protect The Interests Of E-Commerce Consumers

Mumbai Grahak Panchayat's assertive assertion before UNCTAD

On 3rd and 4th July, 2023, yearly conference of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was held at Geneva, of its Inter-Governmental Group of Experts (IGE) on consumer protection.

Adv. Shirish Deshpande, Chairman of MGP was invited for this conference to represent the consumers.

While speaking in this conference he emphasized the need to have Global Online Disputes Mechanism in place to curb the fraudulent practices in e-commerce and to protect the consumers of on-line platform and importance of roll of UNCTAD in protecting such consumers.

While speaking on the hitches of e-commerce, he said that many times, the seller is from one country, manufacturer is from second country and the buyer is from third country. If there is any problem during such transaction, the question of jurisdiction arises. It is not clear that in such situation, law of which country should be made applicable? Therefore, he urged that to resolve this problem, UNCTAD should try that its member states should have consensus on common consumer protection laws. He drew UNCTAD's attention to the resolution passed in General Assembly of United Nations on 13th December, 2016. Vide this resolution, the UN's General Assembly had concluded the need for Global Online Disputes Resolution System for grievance redressal on consumers of online platform. He insisted the need for UNCTAD to step in for the creation of such GODR platform.

Shri. Rohit Kumar, Secretary, department of consumer affairs Central government wholeheartedly supported his plea.

In response to the appeal of MGP, UNCTAD secretariat has consented to have webinar of experts to discuss about the structure and functioning of such Global ODR Platform.

United Nation's Consumer Protection Council

A Creation of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat

UNCTAD has been holding its yearly conference of its "Consumer Protection Council" (with an exception of COVID Period) for last seven years, since 2016. Adv. Shirish Deshpande, Chairman, MGP is the originator of this council!

With the changing times, it became essential for the United Nation's guidelines of 1985 to make and adopt certain changes. It was also necessary to monitor and assist implementation of such changes in the developed and the developing countries. Adv. Shirish Deshpande insisted on the need to create a permanent body for this purpose. He faced lot of resistance from the western developed countries, especially for the financial reasons. But in the year 2015, our Central Government supported this idea. And as a result, on 22nd December, 2015, while accepting amended Consumer Protection Guidelines, MGP's request to have a permanent body - Intergovernmental Group of Experts was also incorporated. Accordingly, now every year in July at Geneva they have a global conference of consumer protection council.

Mumbai Grahak Panchayat is the only voluntary organization from India to have its active contribution in this council.