

# COMMON CAUSE

VOICE OF "COMMON CAUSE"

## UNIQUE ONE PERCENT FORMULA PROJECT FOR UPLIFT OF THE MASSES

The country has made great progress in fields of industrial expansion, technological development, exports, information technology and various other fields of economic progress.

Despite this progress the country has not yet been able to uplift the vast masses who are steeped in poverty and illiteracy. Figures of these are heart-rending and mind-boggling. These, according to estimated statistics, show that

there are in our country two hundred million people below the poverty line, primarily in rural areas. Condition of children is miserable. Millions of children are yet out of school, in spite of the project of spread of primary education launched by the Government. Many of them are girls, on whom poverty and gender discrimination converge. About 100 million children are under-age workers; large number of them are bonded; they toil in inhuman and hazardous conditions, in workshops, beedi-making, glass-ware, carpet weaving, construction work, drain-cleaning. Even more heart-rending is the fact that millions of them are silent victims of sexual abuse, and large number of girls are tricked, flogged and coerced into prostitution. Upto a million of them inhabit the underworld, alongwith the children born to five million prostitutes in the country. Millions of children are steeped in urban slums and squalor. Children of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes are facing even more problems.

- Everybody is eligible to take membership of COMMON CAUSE. No form is required. Merely send your name and complete address, preferably written in CAPITAL LETTERS. Send it to our new address: COMMON CAUSE, Common Cause House, 5, Institutional Area, Nelson Mandela Road, Vasant Kunj, NEW DELHI 110070.
- Membership fee for individuals is Rs. 100 for one year; Rs. 500 for life membership for individuals; Rs. 200 for annual membership of organisations and associations. Send by crossed cheque/demand draft in favour of COMMON CAUSE.
- We receive numerous letters. Replies are invariably sent. On the average our receipt is about 20/30 letters every day. Kindly, therefore, write only when you must; letters received in local language present us difficulties in deciphering.
- Donations to COMMON CAUSE are eligible for exemption available under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act. Your donations, and those of your friends, will be most welcome indeed.

These are facts based on reality despite the provisions which were incorporated in our Constitution 50 years ago.

Article 45 of the Constitution specifically prescribed that the Government must provide, within ten years of the commencement of the Constitution, free and compulsory education to all children until they attain the age of 14 years. Article 24 prescribed that no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in a factory or engaged in any hazardous employment.

Utter disregard of Article 45 of the Constitution for fifty years eventually compelled the Government of India to move a Bill in the Parliament in 1997 to declare that the essence of this Article should be considered a "Fundamental Right". Unfortunately this Bill remained pending for five years and it was only in 2002 that it was eventually passed, comprising 93rd Amendment of the Constitution, adding Article 21-A to the Constitution and deleting Article 45 which had remained inoperative. The Government of India has now the chance of exerting to translate this Fundamental Right into reality; it will of course take some years for this to be achieved but it will help to remove the existing blot of illiteracy.

These facts obviously necessitate special efforts also of the people to help in effecting removal of poverty and illiteracy. For attainment of these objectives COMMON CAUSE has initiated the Project based on "ONE PERCENT FORMULA". The objective is to persuade the Media, including *newspapers, TV, Radio, Magazines* to contribute to

**UPLIFT OF POOR MASSES  
NEWS THAT HURT; OFTEN HEART-RENDING  
DELHI RENT ACT**

**LEGISLATORS OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND  
FAULTY ELECTRICITY BILLING  
CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT - RULES**



GARIB SEVA FUND, one percent of their total annual revenue. Likewise, every individual, organisation and corporate body needs to be persuaded to contribute to the Fund, on voluntary basis, one percent of the annual revenue. One can well imagine that it will not be difficult for an individual or a corporate to contribute one thousand rupees out of hundred thousand, or one lakh rupees out of one crore, with the benefit of income tax exemption, when it is sure that the contribution will be used for the poor and downtrodden.

COMMON CAUSE, which has been in existence for 24 years since its creation, and has made endeavours to ameliorate problems of the people and effect redressal of their grievances, exercises the privilege given by the Government, to accord exemption from income tax on any donations and contributions made to it. Under the privilege COMMON CAUSE is in a position to issue the Certification of exemption from income tax under section 80-G of the Income Tax Act, to every individual, corporate body or media authority for donation made to it.

For these special purposes of poverty removal, illiteracy eradication and improvement of conditions of villagers, COMMON CAUSE has set up the GRIB SEVA FUND to which it is now seeking contributions from the media, corporate bodies, and individuals.

Our Project will be administered under the guidance and supervision of four well-known and respected personalities. The Project will collect authentic information about genuine, reliable and effective NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) in the rural and urban areas. Efforts in this direction have already been made by the organisation CAF (Charity Aid Foundation), supported by the Planning Commission, which has identified about 1300 such NGOs operating in various parts of the country. The Project Officers will also establish contact with Collectors of Districts, through State Governments, for reaching out to the genuine and reliable NGOs and transmission of amounts on six-month basis to them, and ensuring utilisation of the amounts for (a) poverty alleviation, (b) removal of illiteracy and (c) help for disabled, in consultation with Village Panchayats where the amount is to be utilised in rural areas, and for utilisation of the amounts through reliable organisations in urban areas.

The Project of COMMON CAUSE will issue six-monthly report about the collections made on the basis of ONE PERCENT, and utilisation of the Fund for the purposes for which it has been constituted.

While COMMON CAUSE has initiated this project it envisages and suggests that other organisations capable of, or interested in, initiating similar Projects, should kindly consider taking steps for attainment of the outlined objectives. They are welcome to ask COMMON CAUSE for any guidance or help in undertaking similar tasks; their participation will greatly help to strengthen the movement which is of paramount importance for the country. These tasks by the organisations can be effectively pushed without any political affiliation.

We earnestly hope that the Project of COMMON CAUSE based on ONE PERCENT contributions will reach out to all Media, corporates and generous individuals, and persuade them to send us their contributions (COMMON CAUSE HOUSE, 5, Institutional Area, Nelson Mandela Road, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070). Receipts will be sent to them alongwith certification under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act authorising them to claim exemption from the income tax for the contributions remitted.

The project of COMMON CAUSE, and similar projects initiated by other organisations, will supplement the activities and programmes which are presently being implemented and pursued by the Governmental authorities of the Centre and the States. Our objective is the involvement of people in dealing with the serious problems of eradication of poverty and illiteracy, and to help in upliftment of the country. These matters cannot be left only to the Government to solve; these are problems of the people, and people must get themselves involved in overcoming them. Through this Project it will be possible to collect supplementary funds required for attainment of these objectives. Intensive efforts will need to be made for ensuring proper utilisation of the Fund and for obviating any scope and possibility of its leakage or misutilisation. It may be mentioned in this connection that the present Government of India is contemplating levy of a differential cess on income tax payers and corporates for meeting the requirements of education and health sectors. Our Project of ONE PERCENT will apparently be more welcome to the corporates and the people, for reaching out benefit of poverty removal and overcoming illiteracy.

We from COMMON CAUSE place this Project before the people and will be deeply grateful for receiving their views, comments and suggestions. Our address has been given above and we will eagerly look forward to hear from the readers.



## OUR INDIA

### NEWS THAT HURT; ARE OFTEN HEART-RENDING

In our newspapers and through the medium of TV we daily hear and come across news that hurt; they often are heart-rending. These news relate to happenings in urban areas and also in rural areas. These cause exasperations and serious concern that despite our having made such enormous progress in economic development and technical expansion, and despite the systems established for improvements in moral behaviour and enforcement of law and order, these types of happenings are occurring in the living conditions practically everywhere.

We give below samples of some news of the last few days which have caused such concern. These are indicative of what is happening quite often and quite extensively. It is correct that crimes, burglaries, accidents and other such deviations from moral behaviour occur also in other countries, but we are concerned about what we are encountering in our country. We have all to strive to see what more needs to be done to overcome these deviations from human behaviour and perpetuation of such occurrences.

Let us first have glimpse of happenings in rural areas, and thereafter we will have occasion to notice some news of urban areas.

#### ANDHRA PRADESH - DEATH KNEEL FOR FARMERS

A conservative estimate says that 3000 farmers have committed suicide in A.P., and there is no end to the horrific tales of pitiable conditions and sufferings of families of farmers :

Son of a farmer consumed a bottle of pesticide fearing that his father would not be able to repay his loans totalling Rs. 2.0 lakhs taken to buy seeds and fertilizers for groundnut crops. The crops kept failing and the loans kept mounting.

A Harijan farmer took Rs. 13,000/- from private money-lender to buy seeds and manure, the banks had refused to lend him money. Since the crop failed, he committed suicide by hanging, leaving his wife a widow at 20. She has inherited a debt of Rs. 48,000/-, and three children to feed.

A farmer who was suffering from ulcers took loans for digging bore-well. He had to dig three bore-wells as there was no water. All three bore-wells failed. His investment of Rs. 1.5 lakhs was thus wasted. His wife used to handle the agricultural work due to his ailment. Their cow also died, and the tomato crop withered. They had pledged their gold ornaments and had nothing left. Anticipating pressure from money-lenders, the wife committed suicide.

Another farmer took loan to drill bore-well due to failure of rains. He too had to dig three wells. The third well gave just a trickle of water at 500 feet. Resultantly, the crops failed. The farmer bought a pesticide bottle for Rs. 200/- and consumed it to end his life. Now his old parents are threatening to take their lives unless the Govt. comes to their rescue.

These harrowing stories of farmers in Andhra Pradesh are only representative. The suicides continue unabated. Though there was a decline in the number of marginal farmers committing suicides in the run-up to the elections, these went up again after the new government was installed. Seventeen farmers committed suicides in the week ending 20th June, 2004.

#### CHILD MARRIAGES - TEENAGE PREGNANCIES

In the tribal heartland of Chhattisgarh this year, on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami and Akshaya Tritiya,



4,000 children, aged between 3 and 15, were married off - against the law and, needless to say, without their consent or knowledge. Amid the sound of traditional tribal drums the marriages were solemnised by pundits as per the customs and traditions of the tribal communities. After the ritual, there was the customary feast.

This practice is not new. It has been going on for years, especially among the Baiga and Marrar communities. Most such marriages are reported from districts of Kawardha, Rajnandgaon, Mahasamund, Raipur and Durg. The highest number is reported in Kawardha. Earlier the groom's family generally agreed to wait till the bride attained puberty before she moved to her husband's home. But now, it is pressure from the groom's family that forces the underage bride to shift to her inlaw's place. The result is an alarming rise in teenage pregnancies.

And, the state government claims it was not aware of the problem. "I have no information about this practice", says Ramvihar Netam, state minister for SC/ST, backward class, minority, revenue and rehabilitation. Perhaps sensing the impropriety of his own words, he added a rider: "Even if such incidents do occur, it is up to the district administration to take action."

The related problems are numerous. Lack of knowledge about safe sex and improper medication endangers the lives of the mother and child. Infant mortality rate here is among the highest in the country. Average life expectancy of women is about 40 years, while the national average is close to 58 years. Literacy levels among women in this poor, underdeveloped area touch zero.

Many sociologists have expressed outrage at the practice, and the government inaction. A girl who can barely talk is married off. Not only that, if her husband dies, she has to live with stigma of being cursed. The tribal society then starts calling her a Tonhi - which means witch.

### **ENERGETIC MUKHIYA PAYS BY HIS LIFE**

Musahru Yadav, the mukhiya of Sahuri Gram Panchayat in Begusarai district of Bihar was illiterate until he joined an adult literacy camp at the age of 42. He later worked for the literacy campaign in 25 villages. He also led a struggle for securing proper wages for labourers in the district. After being elected, he did many new things. However, the unique achievement for which he will be remembered by hundreds of poor families relates to his success in stopping the local mafia from acquiring poor people's land through mortgage.

Sahuri village is located in the plains of Kosi, Balan and Gandak rivers - infamous for floods. Almost every year the monsoon left the poor in a crisis situation, forcing them to mortgage their land even for food. Many of them failed to pay back and eventually lost their lands to the local landlords and moneylenders. Yadav broke this chain. He told the villagers that under no circumstances should they mortgage their lands. He used the available government funds and mobilised private resources to ensure that during difficult days the needy did not have to go to the moneylenders for help and fall into a debt trap. His commitment and performance as the mukhiya of a gram panchayat is a shining example of how to fight the oppressive forces in the rural areas and make the lives of ordinary people a little more bearable; though he had to pay a heavy price for his idealism.

The moneylenders and land grabbers were naturally furious. On the morning of 17th February, six men shot eight bullets into him. The whole village was aghast at the brutal murder of the popular leader. Around 15,000 residents of Sahuri lynched the two suspects, who had confessed that they had been given the contract to kill Yadav by a landlord/moneylender. The angry mob set ablaze landlord's house and moved on to the police station, snatched two more suspects from police custody and beat them to death. Begusarai police stated that the people who were lynched by the mob were known criminals and wanted in several police cases.

Before this incident, at least four upright elected panchayat representatives had been killed in Begusarai district alone during the last three years-because they stood in the way of the vested interests.



## CALL GIRLS - SEX TRAFFICKING

Lifestyle of three 'upmarket' call girls, who were arrested from near IIT flyover in Delhi recently, has shocked even the policemen investigating the case. Zooming around in luxury cars, holidaying abroad and flaunting their political connections came naturally to these wannabe models. According to the police, one of these women earned as much as Rs. 2.5 lakh every week. She charged Rs. 40,000 from each customer on weekdays and Rs. 80,000 for weekends. If the number of men increased, so did the money. The police admit that these three women exemplify the fact that more and more middle class women are taking to prostitution. The oldest among them is 32-year-old who was married to a chemical engineer in Dehradun. She dumped her "possessive" husband three years ago and came to Delhi. The other, twenty-five-year-old resident of Amritsar, was initiated to prostitution by her boyfriend, who worked as a manager with a fast food outlet in Connaught Place. The third is twenty-year-old daughter of an army officer, and is yet to finish graduation. The three lived in a flat in Khirki Extension. They owned three cars. The girls had even taken part in fashion shows in five-star hotels. These women were game for paid sex only in five star hotels or extravagant farmhouses in Delhi and Haryana. The police said that these women have also named a few politicians who regularly took them to a nearby farmhouse.

The sleaze trade is flourishing, and has become a paying vocation for many. For them country borders do not matter. Recently, some girls from Azerbaijan & Uzbekistan were arrested from a hotel in Karolbagh, Delhi. Among those arrested was a middle-aged woman and her two daughters – one aged sixteen and the other eighteen. She told the police that she took to prostitution as the only other option was starving to death, and that now her daughters have joined the profession too. Their area of operation is Delhi, Mumbai, Dubai and UAE.

But not all these women join the flesh trade of their sweet will. One of the arrested Uzbek woman told the police that they were poor *peasant* women. They had been approached by men with promises of jobs in a UAE hotel. Once they reached UAE, their passports were taken away, they were locked and beaten till they agreed to sleep with their customers. They were also sent to houses of rich officials and businessmen.

There is a much darker side of the trade also. Some girls are tricked into the sex-racket. Sex traffickers are operating in areas where poor people are faced with the curse of poverty and lack of sources for earning a livelihood. Earlier, generally girls from eastern parts of the country, particularly illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh etc. were tricked and sold to brothels. Now, these deceitful acts have spread to other parts also.

Karnataka has unfortunately become a major ground for sex traffickers. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) say unrelenting drought, particularly in the southern districts, has led to a rise in the number of adolescents whose parents have been tricked into giving away their daughters. Brinda Adige of the Makkala Sahaya Vani (MSV) says Sumanya, 15, was rescued by the organisation from a brothel. Sumanya, who lost her father, used to roll agarbattis to make a living. She was trapped by her aunt who offered her a job in Mumbai with a salary of Rs. 2,000. Her family trusted her aunt and sent their daughter with her. Sumanya soon found herself in a brothel in Mumbai.

This is just one of the many stories in a state that is fast becoming the second largest hub of child trafficking after Andhra Pradesh. The southern districts of Bijapur, Raichur and Mysore are the main centres and are linked with national and international sex-net-works, according to NGOs. Most of the girls are between 8 and 16 and belong to poor dalit families. They are lured with jobs, marriages. An NGO has rescued about 450 minor girls from traffickers in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh since 1984.

In some cases, former sex workers and brothel owners act as procurers, or work through contacts in villages to dazzle impoverished villagers with their wealth in order to entice girls. They help needy families with money (as an advance in salary) and take the girls as surety. Families often send their children off in good faith, so they can have a good future. It happened with Manjula. Her mother sold 14-year-old Manjula to a man who promised her a job as a cleaning girl in Bangalore at Rs. 1,000 a month, little suspecting that the girl would end up in a brothel. For three



months, Manjula's mother tried to trace her daughter. When she came to know she was in a brothel, she broke down. Now she has no clue about her daughter's whereabouts. The agent has disappeared. All she got was Rs. 5,000, some of her daughter's earnings.

Many NGOs say Manjula's case is only one of thousands. They are sent from villages to work as maids, but end up as sex workers.

## ROAD DEATHS

The Lodhi Road (New Delhi) curse struck again one early morning when a 37 year old journalist, Rajeev Mathur, was crushed to death at the Dyal Singh College intersection. He was returning from work in his Maruti 800 when it was rammed by a Tata 407 van. The vehicle was twisted out of shape completely. The police had to use a tractor to disentangle the van and pull Mathur out. He was rushed to AIIMS by a PCR van and died at 9 a.m. The 3-km Lodhi Road stretch has seen many such incidents, including the BMW accident, then one in 2002 when five persons, including Channel V veejay Pooja Mukherjee, were killed and last year's Blueline accident in which retired Vice-Admiral N. P. Datta died.

At another point near Nigambodh Ghat, a container ran-over nine persons sleeping on the pavement. The bodies were so crushed that it was difficult to identify them.

People in general continue to be callous in helping victims of road-accidents. A young student of 22-years was crushed to death between two blueline buses at the Badarpur (New Delhi - Faridabad border) bus-stand. His friend begged every autowaala for 15 minutes to help him take his friend to a hospital. Nobody came forward. He was finally taken to Apollo Hospital by a PCR van. But it was too late by then, he was declared "brought dead".

## CASE DRAGS ON FOR 42 YEARS

Girdhari Lal Gathani filed a case in March, 1962 for eviction of his tenant on the plea of bonafide personal need. Though he secured favourable orders from the lower court, he died before the premises could be vacated. The M. P. High Court then ruled that the ground of personal need no more existed, and gave verdict in favour of the tenant. His wife and children took the case to the Supreme Court. A Bench of the Court has now observed that : "It is a shocking case. A suit for eviction of a tenant was instituted more than 42 years ago in March 1962 for the bonafide need for carrying on business by the owner landlord, but his widow and sons are still knocking at the doors of court of justice." Advising the High Courts across the country not to take such extreme views, the Bench says: "Such extreme views erode the faith of the people in the judicial system prompting them to take recourse to extra judicial methods to recover, possession of their property."

## EX-MINISTER BRIBERY CASE

Gingee Ramachandran alleged bribery case has resulted in an unprecedented dragnet thrown over Income Tax officials. The CBI has slapped criminal cases against 12 Income Tax officials in Chennai and has written to the Finance Ministry to take departmental action against 102 more officials - several of whom are Commissioners. The CBI claims it has evidence against each of 114 officials for having used services and the hospitality of A. Krishnamurthy, the Chartered Accountant, who was in alleged cahoots with Gingee's secretary, Perumal Swamy, resulting in the Minister's resignation.

The 12 officers against whom cases were filed were those before whom Krishnamurthy's clients had appeared for settlement of Income Tax claims. Officials say that a scrutiny of the assessments showed a pattern of favourable



decisions given by the Commissioners and a reduction of taxes and penalties by as much as Rs. 20-30 lakh in several claims. In all, claims worth crores were reduced for Krishnamurthy's clients by these officials. On the list of 12 officers who are now facing charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act, incidentally, are the former Director General of Investigations and the Additional Director, Investigations, earlier posted in the Chennai circle.

## DESTITUTION, CHILD LABOUR & CRIMINALITY

Social Welfare Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, recently published photographs of 12 children aged between 8 months and 10 years, seven of them girls, who were rescued and admitted in the Balika Nirikshan Griha by the Police. The Department has appealed to the parents / guardians to contact the organisation so that the children could be restored to them. Children are being sold or abandoned by poor parents. They are also being pushed into child labour, or worst into prostitution. About 100 million children are engaged in host of labour work, sometimes in inhuman and hazardous conditions. They work for 12-16 hours every day in vocations like carpet weaving, embroidery, glass-ware, beedi-making and even fire-works for making crackers etc.

Some children are led into criminal activities. Delhi Police arrested four children who had allegedly committed 20 burglaries. Whereas two children were respectively aged 13 & 14, the other two were barely 10 years old. Another serious aspect of the burglaries is that besides lavish spending of ill-acquired wealth, they confessed that they have even started going to sex-workers at this tender-age. It can certainly lead to more serious consequences of acquiring AIDs and other sexually transmitted diseases.

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When a piercing shriek of "Oh, my God!" broke off a matter-of-fact telephone conversation between a married couple, the husband, terrified by the ensuing silence, called the police.

Fifteen policemen sped to the house and found an unconscious woman beside a dangling telephone. Revived, she gasped: "He's still here in the house. He may be under a bed, or he may be in a cupboard. But he's still here. He ran straight up to me...."

"What did he look like?" interrupted the police sergeant.

"Why, he looked like - like any other mouse, I think - only more so."

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How do you pay a Civil Servent ten times what he's worth?

Privatise his department and give him share options.

...

When James graduated from Oxford he applied for a position in the Civil Service. At his selection interview he was asked: "What can you do well?"

James thought for a moment and then replied: "Nothing."

"Good!" cried the selection panel in unison. "You're just the sort of chap we want - and we won't even have to break you in!"

...

The young man asked the beautiful young girl to marry him, pointing out that his father was 103 years old and that he was heir to his father's substantial fortune.

The girl asked the young man for time to consider his offer. Two weeks later, she became his step-mother.

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## DELHI RENT CONTROL ACT

Our readers are aware of the problems which continue to be encountered in relation to the non-enforcement of the Delhi Rent Control Act. The original Act, which is still operative, is an antiquated legislation, of 1958. In the context of serious problems that working of rent control measures have created in various States, the Conference of Chief Ministers held in 1992 emphasised the need of bringing about an atmosphere where-in there is balance between the interests of owners and tenants, and scope of increasing availability of rental accommodations in urban centres in the country. Keeping in view these objectives, and based on the recommendations of the Conference of Chief Ministers, Government of India had got a modal Rent Bill prepared in 1994 and circulated to all States. In so far as Delhi is concerned, Delhi Rent Control Act was passed in 1995, but due to agitations launched by certain politicians and tenants of residences and commercial premises it could not be enforced even though it had received assent of the President of India and had become an Act in 1995. The matter was taken by COMMON CAUSE to the High Court of Delhi, which expressed disinclination to issue any direction to the Government for notification of the Act; thereafter it was taken to the Supreme Court of India where it is still pending.

Recently the Rajya Sabha Secretariat had invited submission of Petitions on matters pending before the Rajya Sabha. We submitted a Petition on this subject. A long Report (along with the Hindi translation) has been prepared by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. A copy of the Report was sent to COMMON CAUSE. We have transmitted our comments thereon. These comments comprising the presentation of the entire background and the present problems are reproduced below for our readers.

### SUBJECT : DELHI RENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1997, PENDING IN THE RAJYA SABHA

"The Petitioner, H. D. Shourie, Director, COMMON CAUSE, feels privileged for receipt of copy of 119th Report of the Committee on Petitions on the subject relating to Amendment of Delhi Rent Act.

Following are the main facts of the case, as also substantiated in the Report of the Committee on Petitions.

The prevalent Delhi Rent Act is of 1958, enacted half a century ago. Hundreds of thousands of problems between tenants and owners of residences and commercial premises, have emerged on account of the continuation of this antiquated Act.

The Conference of Chief Ministers in 1992 recommended overhauling of Rent Control laws for bringing about balance between the interests of tenants and owners.

Arising therefrom a Bill was prepared in 1994 and presented to the Parliament. It was passed by both the Houses of Parliament and received the assent of the President of India, thereby becoming the Delhi Rent Control Act. Clause No. 1(3) of the Act, as normally appears in every Act, provided that the Act would come into force from the date of its notification.

Interests of tenants, supported by certain politicians, disabled the final issue of notification for bringing the Act into force. The Petitioner COMMON CAUSE had taken the matter to the Delhi High Court where the Double Bench expressed disinclination to issue direction to the Government for notification of the Act. The matter was then taken by the Petitioner to the Supreme Court where the matter continues pending and no final decision has been taken.



This matter also languished for a couple of years in the Parliament and thereafter an Amendment Bill was submitted in 1997, incorporating certain provisions which were considered necessary to meet the requirements of aggrieved tenants. It is undoubtedly a matter of serious concern that the Delhi Rent (Amendment) Bill, 1997, introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1997, is still pending finalisation. The Bill had been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development, which submitted its Report on December 21, 2000. Notices for taking up these Amendments in the Rajya Sabha were given a number of times; on 19-7-2001, 26-7-2001, 7-11-2001, 25-2-2002, 29-6-2002, 9-10-2002 and 20-6-2003, but the Bill could not be taken up. It has been pending in the Rajya Sabha for almost seven years since 1997.

As stated above, an antiquated Act, 1958, dealing with the important issues of tenants and owners of residences and commercial establishments, was passed by both the Houses of Parliament in 1995 and received assent of the President of India. This initiative was taken on the basis of recommendations made by the 1992 Conference of Chief Ministers. Since 1995, because of Clause No. 1(3), which provides that the Act could come into force from the date of its notification, the entire matter has sadly languished on account of the Amendment Bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1997 which, even after repeated notices issued by the concerned Ministry, has not been taken up even after seven years, in spite of the importance of the subject which, as stated earlier, affects the interests of hundreds of thousands of owners and tenants.

The Rajya Sabha had been kind enough to invite Petitions on pending subjects. The Petitioner COMMON CAUSE had submitted the Petition. A detailed and comprehensive report of 46 foolscap printed pages has been submitted to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, furnishing all the relevant details.

The Petitioner humbly submits to the Rajya Sabha that the matter of such importance has been unfortunately pending for seven years in the Rajya Sabha, awaiting final decision on the pending Delhi Rent (Amendment) Bill, 1997. The Petitioner respectfully submits that it would be in the interests of city of Delhi, and will also pave the way for improvement of Rent Control legislation in other States of the country, if the Rajya Sabha is requested to expeditiously finalise the enactment of this Bill."

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A poor man sat outside a temple begging for alms from the devotees: 'In the name of Bhagwan give this hungry man some paise to fill his belly. Bhagwan will bless you.' But the people who want to pay in the temple, gave the poor beggar so little that it was never enough to buy dal-roti. In sheer disgust he quit the temple and sat outside a theka (a country liquor shop) where people came for their evening quota of desi. 'A few paise in the name of Bhagwan, 'he whined, as people came out in high spirits. Instead of paise many dropped rupee notes in his begging bowl. The beggar gave thanks to God in the following words : 'Hey Bhagwan, truly inscrutable are thy ways : You give one address but live in another place'.

...

"Listen," shouted a big man through the telephone box to a little men inside, 'You've been holding that phone for nearly twenty-five minutes and not said a single word".

"Sir", said the little man, "I'm talking to my wife".

...

Husband (driving his car past a farmer's pair of mules which happened to bray at that moment) : "Relatives of yours, I suppose".

Wife, smiling sweetly : "Yes, by matrimony".

...



## LEGISLATORS OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND

We reproduce below the letter which was recently addressed on 4th June, 2004 from COMMON CAUSE to Chief Justice of India pleading for Suo Moto action to be taken on the information contained in the Memorandum submitted to the President of India wherein details have been furnished about the criminal antecedents of some Members of Parliament who have been elevated to the position of Ministers in the new Cabinet. Summary of the Memorandum has been reproduced; facts recorded in it will be of interest to readers.

This letter to CJI was followed by another letter on 9th June, 2004 wherein we have urged for expediting justice. CJI has been requested to issue directions to the concerned High Courts and Sessions Courts etc., where cases of these politicians have been languishing, to arrange day-to-day hearing for expeditious disposal of the cases, in the interest of functioning of democracy in the country. The letter of 9th June is also reproduced below :

### Letter to Chief Justice of India (dated 4.6.2004)

"Your Lordship,

It will have been noticed by your Lordship from today's newspaper (Photo-copy of the relevant portion from the Hindustan Times enclosed for ready reference) that a number of Members of Parliament are stated to have gone to the President of India to submit a Memorandum wherein they have furnished details of serious criminal cases filed and pending against certain newly elected Members of Parliament, pleading that the President of India should debar them from holding the charge of Ministers of new Government.

We from COMMON CAUSE have been able to secure a copy of the Memorandum which has been submitted to the President of India. Photo-copy is enclosed for ready reference.

It will be noticed from this Memorandum that quite a few criminal cases involving serious crimes are pending against named persons who have been made Ministers. It is very unfortunate indeed that this has been allowed to happen. This unfortunately amounts to severe defiling of our democracy, of which the country has justification for taking pride that ours is the largest functioning democracy in the world.

The legal position stated to be taken, in favour of these Members who have been given responsibility as Ministers, is that relevant provision of the Representation of People Act lays down that unless a person is convicted by a court of law he is entitled to stand for election. It is contended thereby if such a person, who is facing criminal charges but has not been convicted can stand for election, there cannot be any bar to his being given charge as Minister.

There is obviously need of removing this blot from our democracy, and if there is any such provision in Representation of People Act which enables a person to be elevated to the position of Minister of the Government, even when he is involved in serious criminal cases and charges have been framed against him, there is obvious need of removing this blot.

Your Lordship, we from COMMON CAUSE submit that your Lordship may kindly consider the matter suo moto, and consider taking following steps for avoidance of defiling our democracy :-

- (i) Advise the President of India to consider declaring any such Member of Parliament, who has been charged in criminal cases of serious nature, of the nature of embezzlement, fraud, rape, murder etc. to be disentitled to become Member of Parliament and to be given charge and responsibility as Minister of the Government; and
- (ii) Advise the Parliament that they should consider suitably amending the Representation of People Act to disentitle any person standing for Parliament if he has been charged by a Court of law in a serious criminal case of the nature above mentioned.



Your Lordship, we from COMMON CAUSE are feeling very concerned about these developments and we consider that almost the entire populace of the country must be feeling the same way, and, therefore, we have considered it appropriate to make the submission to you to take suo moto notice of these facts for issue of requisite directions."

Yours Respectfully.

### Another Letter to Chief Justice of India (dated 9.6.2004)

"Your Lordship,

I made submission to you in my letter of 4th June, 2004 (photo-copy enclosed for ready reference) with which I have forwarded copy of the Memorandum prepared by the political party BJP wherein they have urged that the persons chargesheeted with serious crimes should not be allowed to join the Ministry as it will cause debasement of politics. I have requested that your Lordship may take Suo Moto notice of these facts and consider initiation of action which would obviate the possibility of debasement of politics in this manner.

Your Lordship will have observed from today's newspaper that both Houses of Parliament have to be adjourned without transacting any business on account of the matter of the Memorandum having been highlighted, along with raising of doubts by the Members of Parliament of opposition. It will not be any exaggeration to emphasize that one day's non-transaction of business of both Houses of Parliament costs the exchequer about Rs. 75 lakhs.

This is obviously a matter of very serious consequence. We in COMMON CAUSE have been asked by the people to make further submission to your Lordship for finding ways of early solution of this tangle. Our suggestion is that your Lordship may communicate urgent directions to the concerned High Courts / Sessions Courts etc., where the respective cases of the concerned politicians are presently pending, directing them to hold day-to-day hearing of such cases in order to arrive at the final decision within the next few days. It is a matter of importance that delays in dispensing of justice should be avoided to the maximum. In these particular cases it is obviously of paramount importance, from the viewpoint of functioning of democracy, that the pending cases against the named persons who have been given the responsibility as Ministers should be immediately finalised.

We have been urged to submit to the Supreme Court the Public Interest Litigation on this matter but we feel that the immediate urgency of this important issue should better be referred to you for Suo Moto action. Accordingly, we are making this submission in continuation of our previous letter of 4th June, 2004, referred to above."

Yours Respectfully.

### SUMMARY OF THE MEMORANDUM ON INCLUSION OF TAINTED MINISTERS IN THE UNION CABINET.

(Enclosed with Letter to Chief Justice of India)

Election Commission has prescribed an affidavit for submission by the candidates contesting elections to the State Legislatures and Lok Sabha on the orders passed by the Supreme Court of India. It is observed from the affidavits submitted by six Members of Parliament (MPs) that serious criminal cases involving embezzlement, fraud, attempt to murder, kidnapping, extortion etc., are pending against them in various Courts/Police Stations. Since it is a coalition ministry, the Prime Minister has appointed these tainted MPs as Ministers in order to retain support from the political parties to which they belong. The details of these ministers are: -

1) **Sh. Laloo Prasad Yadav :**

He has been given all important portfolio of Railway Minister. He is an accused in Bihar Fodder Scam involving mis-appropriation of hundreds of crores of rupees of public money. The case is not confined to only one treasury but six treasuries through which the funds were released and mis-appropriated. It will be relevant to mention



here that these cases were not instituted during the rule of National Democratic Alliance but during the period of National Front Govt. supported by Congress. As a consequence of these cases having been registered and charge sheets filed, Sh. Laloo Prasad Yadav had to resign as Chief Minister of Bihar, and was subsequently arrested. He is presently on bail; no case has been stayed. As a matter of fact, Patna High Court is monitoring the cases on the directions of Supreme Court of India. It is obviously untenable to appoint a person as a Cabinet Minister when he cannot be retained as Chief Minister of a State because of criminal cases filed against him. Sh. Laloo Prasad Yadav is also facing a case of disproportionate accumulation of assets during his tenure as Chief Minister of Bihar.

2) **Sh. Mohd. Taslimuddin:**

He has been appointed as Minister of State. He was formerly a minister for Home Affairs in the Govt. of Sh. H. D. Deva Gowda. When his criminal antecedents came to light, he was removed from the Cabinet. The same cases including attempt to murder, cheating, forgery, extortion and kidnapping, use of firearms etc., are still pending in various courts at Araria and Kishanganj in Bihar; in all 9 cases have been registered against him under various sections of IPC. There is no logic to appoint him a Minister of State again except to retain power.

3) **Sh. Jai Prakash Yadav:**

Sh. Jai Prakash Yadav was a Minister of Minor Irrigation in the Govt. of Bihar. He was made an accused by the Vigilance Dept. of Govt. of Bihar under various sections of IPC and Prevention of Corruption Act. It was inter alia alleged that previously as the Secondary Education Minister, he entered into a conspiracy to give permission for setting-up of a college against prevailing rules. The said college was allegedly issuing fake degrees of Bachelor of Education. His anticipatory bail was rejected by Supreme Court. In view of his impending arrest he had to resign as a Minister in the Govt. of Bihar. He was not taken back in the State Cabinet for the same reason; the case is pending trial. Still he has now been made a Minister of State in the Union Cabinet.

4) **Sh. Shibbu Soren:**

He has been appointed as a Cabinet Minister of Coal & Mines. A few cases involving serious crimes under various sections of IPC and Prevention of Corruption Act are pending against him with the CBI.

5) **Sh. M. A. Fatimi:**

He was a Member of Parliament in the year 1998 from Darbhanga constituency of Bihar. He was investigated in connection with a sensational case of kidnapping for ransom under Section 364 A of the IPC. The case was investigated by Superintendent of Police, Darbhanga. In her report, the S. P. had noted the links of Sh. Fatimi with a whole lot of inter-state kidnapers. He was found to be in constant touch with the syndicate of kidnapers including Fazlur Rahman, a notorious criminal who indulges into international crimes and was also reportedly a part of the Irfan Goga and Babloo Shrivastava Gangs. She further noted that one of the accused involved in the kidnapping racket, viz. Atikur Rahman was given a fax machine by Sh. Fatimi. The S. P. directed the investigating officers to examine the role of Sh. Fatimi in greater detail and to interrogate him. The concerned S. P. was issued serious threats by gangsters. Though no follow-up action was taken against Sh. Fatimi but the S. P. was transferred.

6) **Sb. Prernchand Gupta:**

He has been given the important charge of Minister of State for Company Affairs when he is facing a foreign exchange violation case involving \$ 4.75 million. He also reportedly received an amount of Rs. 1.00 crore from one of the Fodder Scam accused; this fact was deposed in the C.B. 1. Special Court at Patna. The Enforcement Directorate imposed a penalty of Rs. 10.00 crores on Sh. Gupta. He has filed an appeal which is pending with Tribunal. The Income Tax Dept. also raided six business and residential premises of Sh. Gupta in April 1998 in connection with investigation into the Fodder and Bitumen Scams of Bihar. Still he has been appointed as M.O.S. in the Dept. of Company Affairs.



As a protest against the inclusion of these allegedly tainted ministers in the Union Cabinet, the opposition party (NDA) did not allow Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to function for four days after the address of President of India to the joint sitting of the two Houses. Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned. The non-functioning of Parliament for four days has resulted in wastage of public funds to the extent of a minimum of Rs. 3.0 crores; Each day costs the ex-chequer approx. Rs.75 lakhs, apart from other perks which Parliamentarians continue to enjoy.

## EMOLUMENTS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

A two-time M.P. has claimed they are not properly paid commensurate with their duties, and that salary and perks of MPs here are far less than other countries.

According to a financial consultant, the salary and perks of an M.P. is higher than IIT or IIM graduates at the entry level. But after five years, of course they may almost become static while that of the IIT / IIM graduates could reach Rs. 40 lakh per year.

Salary of an M.P. is Rs. 12,000 p.m. or Rs. 1.44 lakh p.a. Besides salary, each MP gets per annum office expenses - Rs. 1.68 lakhs, constituency allowance - Rs. 1.20 lakhs, daily allowance - Rs. 1.35 lakhs, daily travel - Rs. 2.0 lakhs, Railway travel - Rs. 1.0 lakh, Air travel - Rs. 6.0 lakhs, Water & Power expenses Rs. 2.0 lakhs, Bungalow allowance - Rs. 12.0 lakhs, and telephone - Rs. 2.0 lakhs. All this adds upto Rs. 32.0 lakhs p.a. MPs are also entitled to Rs. 3,000/- p.m. as pension, an amount which goes up according to the number of years he/she has served in Parliament.

A fellow just bought a car. His wife went with him on a few expeditions, and did not hesitate to criticize his driving.

"Hello, old man", said a neighbour one evening. "I see you've got a car. What do you get out of her?"

"About forty thousand words to the gallon", answered the husband.

...

A lot of men believe in long engagements because they think that young couples ought to be happy as long as possible.

...

Office boy : Sorry madam, but the boss has gone to lunch with his wife.

Wife : O well .... tell him his stenographer had called.

...

The guest speaker concluded a long boring speech and the Committee Chairman handed him a cheque.

"No, no", said the speaker, "I wouldn't think of charging you, please contribute my honorarium to some worthy cause".

"Would you mind if we put it in our club's special fund?" asked the Chairman.

"Of course not, what is the fund for?"

"To help us to get better speakers".

...

At a pharmacy, a woman wanted to use the infant scale to weigh the baby she held in her arms. The clerk complained that the device was out for repairs, but said he would estimate the infant's size by weighing the mother and baby together on the adult scale, then weighing the mother alone and subtracting the second amount from the first.

"It won't work", countered the woman. "I'm not the mother, I'm the grandmother".

...

A man saw an epitaph in a cemetery that read : "Here lies an honest man and politician".

"Shame", he said, 'two people in the same grave".

...



## FAULTY ELECTRICITY BILLING AT DELHI BY PRIVATISED COMPANIES

Tens of thousands of residents of Delhi have felt greatly harassed by receipt of excessive and inflated electricity bills during the last few months since the electricity distribution was transferred from the Government operated Delhi Vidyut Board to three privatised companies (DISCOMS - Distribution Companies). Electricity meters of about 4 lakh consumers (out of total of about 29 lakhs) have been changed from electro-magnetic meters to electronic meters on the plea that the former were prone to manipulations and leakage of revenue.

COMMON CAUSE received a large number of complaints that were sent by the consumers to Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission and to the concerned privatised companies of their areas. It was gathered that about 10,000 / 12,000 complaints have been received by the Regulatory Commission / Discoms.

COMMON CAUSE has prepared a comprehensive Writ Petition on the subject. Further action is being pursued.

We feel that consumers of electricity, particularly of Delhi, should be aware of the action that was considered necessary and appropriate. We are, therefore, reproducing the Writ Petition for information. We will determine the next appropriate step to seek amelioration of this problem

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### IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI EXTRAORDINARY CIVIL JURISDICTION CIVIL WRIT PETITION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ OF 2004

In the matter of :

COMMON CAUSE  
(A Registered Society)  
A-31, West End,  
New Delhi-110021  
Through its Director,  
H.D. Shourie

Versus

- 1) Government of NCT of Delhi  
Delhi Government Secretariat,  
ITO Complex,  
New Delhi-110002  
Through its Principal Secretary (Power)
- 2) Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission,  
Viniyamak Bhawan,  
C-Block, Shivalik, Malviya Nagar,  
New Delhi-110017  
Through its Chairman
- 3) THREE DISCOMS

A PETITION UNDER ARTICLE 226 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA FOR ISSUANCE OF A WRIT IN THE NATURE OF MANDAMUS AND/OR ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE WRIT, ORDER/ DIRECTION DIRECTING THE RESPONDENT NO. 1 TO EXAMINE IN CONSULTATION WITH RESPONDENT NO.2 AS TO WHY SUCH ENORMOUS NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS OF EXCESSIVE BILLING, PROVISIONAL BILLING, ARREARS APPEARING IN BILLS, AND OTHER SUCH PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH ELECTRICITY BILLS, ARE BEING ENCOUNTERED BY CONSUMERS OF ELECTRICITY IN THE CITY OF DELHI WHOSE ELECTRICITY METERS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CHANGED BY DISCOMS FROM PREVIOUSLY OPERATING ELECTRO-MECHANICAL METERS TO ELECTRONIC METERS, WHETHER THE ELECTRONIC METERS ARE TOTALLY FREE FROM MANUFACTURING AND OPERATING DEFECTS, AND WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO SATISFACTORILY REDRESS THE DISTRESS CAUSED TO THE CONSUMERS OF ELECTRICITY.



To

The Hon'ble the Chief Justice and His Lordship's Companion Justices of the Delhi High Court.

The Humble Petition of the Petitioner above-named MOST RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH :

1. That the petitioner is a Society duly Registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860, and has been engaged in taking up various grievances to seek their amelioration, inter alia, by way of public interest litigation. The Petitioner has an established locus standi as a bonafide public interest Society.
2. That there are about 25 lakhs consumers in Delhi, out of which four to five lakhs are commercial and industrial electricity consumers. Till three years ago electricity to consumers of whole of Delhi, was being supplied by Delhi Vidyut Board. On 20th November, 2000, Respondent No. 1 notified the Delhi Electricity Reforms (Transfer) Scheme, 2001, under which electricity transmission in Delhi was transferred from Delhi Vidyut Board to Delhi Transco, and distribution was decided to be transferred to three electricity distributing companies (DISCOMs) which comprise (i) BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, (ii) BSES Yamuna Power Limited and (iii) North Delhi Power Limited. These three distribution companies started distribution of power in their respective areas. Out of total, 23 lakh consumers are reported to be in the areas of BSES Rajdhani and BSES Yamuna. Respondent No. 1 constituted Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission, Respondent No. 2, under Delhi Reforms Act, 2000. The Commission became operative from 1st December, 1999. Functions of the commission include the regulation of power projects, transmission, distribution, sale and supply, to issue licences for transmission & bulk supplies, maintain vigil on arrangements for supply of electricity, and to regulate the working of the licensees. It might be mentioned in this connection that the Commission till now has been one-man Commission though there have been demands that it should be three-Member Commission for enabling it to discharge its responsibilities more effectively.
3. One major activity which was initiated by DISCOMs has been that since their establishment they considered it necessary to change the electro-mechanical meters to electronic meters. The electro-mechanical meters had been operating for decades. It was felt by DISCOMs that these were prone to theft of electricity and other defects. Therefore, a decision was taken to change these electro-mechanical meters by electronic meters which were considered to be tamper-proof. Nearly 4 to 5 lakh electronic meters have so far been installed by DISCOMs. These include industrial/commercial as well as domestic meters, and are also stated to include new connections in some cases. Price of the single-phase electronic meter is stated to be Rs. 800/- to Rs. 900/- and for three-phase meters, the price is about Rs. 2,800/- to Rs. 3,000/-. It is claimed by DISCOMs that all electronic meters installed by them are of ISI Mark though this fact is being disputed by the consumers.
4. That since the installation of electronic meters at the premises of domestic consumers a very large number of complaints are being received, which get reflected in newspapers and are being received by the Residents Welfare Associations, a large number of which have been established in the housing colonies of Delhi. These complaints are of wrong billing, excessive billing, provisional billing, billing inclusive of arrears already paid. Receipt of these excessive and defective bills has caused great concern and exasperations to consumers, besides the problems of frequent break-downs of electric current which have been happening during the last many months and about which the Chief Minister of Delhi has also expressed concern as reported in newspapers. They claim to have sent their complaints to the concerned DISCOMs authorities without securing any redress. They often visit the concerned offices and fail to secure any redress or even hearing by concerned officers.
5. Facts and views which have during the last few months been featuring in the Press and had been expressed by consumers of electricity whose meters have been changed to electronic meters are broadly on the following pattern :
  - (i) Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission has also taken cognizance of large number of complaints received from the consumers of electricity, and in addition a direction has been issued by the Commission on 23-2-2004 directing DISCOMs to resolve grievances of consumers immediately, failing which penal action will be taken against them.



- (ii) Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission vide its notification dated 11-03-2004 has issued Regulations prescribing the procedure of setting up Forums by all the three DISCOMs for redressal of grievances of consumers. Each Forum will consist of three members and exercise jurisdiction to entertain complaints filed in respect of electricity services provided by the concerned company of DISCOMs. Detailed instructions have been given regarding the procedure for handling of grievances of consumers and redressal thereof. The Commission has also been authorised to appoint Ombudsman for dealing with complaints. An advertisement has also been issued by the Commission in newspapers inviting applications for appointment of Ombudsman under the Electricity Act.
  - (iii) People have a feeling that the change-over of meters from previously operating electro-magnetic meters to electronic meters has been primarily for providing some profit to the proprietors of privatised DISCOMs, and that this has not been merely for effecting improvements. In this matter parallel is being drawn by the people with the processes of change-over recently contemplated in the transmission of programmes on TV through Pay Channels and other channels, which was based on the installation of Set Top Box on each TV set, involving considerable lot of expenditure. This proposal was resisted by the people and eventually concerned Ministry of the Government of India has till now not proceeded with it. It had been contemplated in their proposal that the Set Top Boxes would be imported in the first instance and that the imports would be of the order of millions. This was reported to be motivated by profit for the intermediaries. In the present case too the electronic meters are reported to have been imported from China and that the quality of their manufacture was sub-standard. There is no independent meter testing agency which can certify the accuracy and correctness of the meters. The privatised DISCOMs themselves have apparently taken the responsibility of testing the meters. It is also reported that one of the manufacturers of electronic meters, TTL, had been blacklisted and its stock of about 40,000 meters had to be rejected.
  - (iv) No specific standards are reported to have been prescribed in relation to electronic meters by the Bureau of Indian Standards. It has not been possible for the Petitioner to ascertain, despite efforts made by contacting senior officers of Bureau of Indian Standards, whether the electronic meters installed by DISCOMs bear ISI Marks and have been tested in the laboratories of BIS. Apparently, for purposes of dealing with complaints of citizens, recently installed electronic meters will need to be taken off for the purposes of testing in the laboratories of Bureau of Indian Standards, which process has not been found feasible nor convenient. It is gathered that no standards have been prescribed by BIS for electronic meters, and, therefore, no benchmark standards are available to counter check the accuracy and authenticity of installed electronic meters.
  - (v) No proper and reliable grievances redressal machinery has so far been set up for taking up and examining the complaints of consumers for removal of their grievances. It has been ascertained that Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission, Respondent No. 2, had observed in its Order dated 23-02-04 that there had been undue delays by DISCOMs in setting up satisfactory machinery for dealing with complaints of consumers whereas they are naturally bound to set up such machinery. It has been stated to have been pointed out by Respondent No. 2 that the problems of metering and billing have been specially acute in the case of BSES.
  - (vi) There have been threats of coercive action of disconnection by BSES where the consumers have raised objections about inflated and wrong billing; senior citizens including old ladies have been specifically mentioned in this connection.
  - (vii) It is gathered from sources close to Respondent No. 2, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission, that the Commission has not been taking strong action against BSES, and has been postponing the possibility of penal action against wrong and inflated billing. Electricity supply to residents is mainly done by BSES.
6. That according to estimates about 10,000 / 12,000 complaints have been received by BSES about fast running meters, excessive billing etc. The consumers have been expressing deep distress and exasperations at not being able to get their problems resolved satisfactorily from BSES officials inspite of repeated visits to their offices. The Petitioner has received large number of complaints, along with photo-copies of the inflated bills which have been received by various consumers. It would be improper to burden the Petition with all these complaints and the electricity bills. Instead, the Petitioner submits hereunder certain specimens of the complaints which have been received :-



- (a) An old lady Ms. Kumudini Palit (Address : C-423, Defence Colony, IIInd Floor, New Delhi-24) has complained of having received an inflated bill of Rs. 29,200/- for two months consumption. She is living in single Barasati bed room and has, in her communication, given resume of the harassment that she has experienced in securing redressal from BSES (Annexure I with its enclosure).
- (b) Dr. Samiran Nundy of the Department of Gastrointestinal Surgery, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital (Address ; F-13, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi-110016) has complained of having received a bill of Rs. 23,720/- for the month of March, 2004, for consumption of 5854 units whereas the consumption was never previously higher than 1973 units (Annexure II with its enclosure).
- (c) Sayed S. Shafi, City & Regional Planner (Address : Flat 22, Hauz Khas SFS Apartments, Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016) has complained of having received a bill of Rs. 6,400/- for the month of March, 2004 for consumption of 1176 units whereas the consumption of electricity has ranged from 168 units to a maximum of 259 units during the previous year. Sayed Shafi and his family were away from India from 6th September, 2003 to 7th February, 2004 and the last bill paid by him on 10-03-2004 was of the amount of Rs. 1010/- (Annexure III with its enclosure).
- (d) Mr. Pankaj Agarwal, Coordinator of EFFORTS GROUP - Federation of Residents Welfare Associations of Safdarjung Enclave (Address : B-3/55, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029) has sent a detailed letter of the metering and billing problems encountered by citizens of the locality. The numerous enclosures forwarded by him are not being attached, for avoidance of over-burdening of the Petitioner (Annexure IV).
- (e) Mrs. Shanti Achanta (Address : 212, Sector A, Pocket-C, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070) has communicated her problem in relation to inflated electricity bills in her communication of 17th April, 2004, addressed to the Petitioner. (Annexure V).
- (f) Mrs. Basant Prabha Chawla (Address : E-13, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi-110013) has, in her communication, addressed to the Petitioner, intimated problem encountered in relation to inflated electricity bill of Rs. 30,794/- received for the period from 13-05-2003 to 28-07-2003 (Annexure VI).
- (g) Mr. K. L. Singhal (Address ; 129, Bank Enclave, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092) has addressed a letter to the Petitioner on 14-4-2004 and has intimated that ever since a new meter was got installed on 9-8-2003, he has received an inflated electricity bill for September, 2003, for an amount of Rs. 3,17,580/- for 78350 units and in the month of November, 2003, he received an electricity bill of Rs. 3,30,720/- for 1115 units whereas the electricity bill for the month of January, 2004 is Rs. 12,470/-. He has reported that the electronic meters purchased by BSES are of sub-standard quality and run very fast. He has further mentioned that there is absolutely no response from BSES. (Annexure VII with its enclosures).
- (h) Mr. Vikram Mehra (Address : B-26, West End, New Delhi-110021) has, in his communication of 20th March, 2004, addressed to the Petitioner mentioned excessive bill of Rs. 22,771/- for consumption of 6065 units for the period from 24-07-2003 to 15-11-2003. He has stated that his average consumption is not more than 500 units as per previous electricity bills (Annexure VIII with its enclosure).
- (i) Mr. Sarbajit Roy (Address : B-59, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024) has addressed his communication of 27th April, 2004, to the Petitioner wherein he has given detailed observations in relation to faulty electronic meters provided by BSES in place of electro-magnetic meters. He has also given technical analysis of electronic meters and the previously installed electro-magnetic meters by Delhi Vidyut Board. (Annexure IX).
- (j) Mr. Mahesh Chandra (Address : E-534, Greater Kailash Part II, New Delhi-110048) has, in his communication of 26th April, 2004, addressed to the Petitioner given observations and suggestions in relation to the new electronic meters provided by BSES and the problems of excessive electricity bills. (Annexure X).
- (k) Ms. Ruby Bahl (Address : B-38, Tarang Apartments, 19, I.P. Extension, Delhi-110092) has addressed to the Petitioner a communication dated 20-04-2004 in relation to inflated electricity bills. She has further stated that the meter reading shows consumption of more than 15/20 units per day when they are only three members in their family. (Annexure XI).



- (l) Complaint No. 13/SVMC/2004 dated 28-04-2004 has been received from Maj. Gen. J. P.; Gupta (Retd.) mentioning 18 complaints in relation to inflated bills on account of fast running of electronic meters of residents of Som Vihar Apartments Owners Housing Maintenance Co-operative Society Ltd., this is a Society of Ex-Defence Officers. The list of complaints is placed at Annexure XII).
  - (m) We have received a complaint dated 28-03-2004 from General Secretary, Gulmohar Park Journalists Colony Welfare Association, New Delhi forwarding three complaints of Mr. O. P. Mantri (Address : B-71, Gulmohar Park), Ms. Ritu Kakkar (Address : A-22, B-24, Gulmohar Park) and Mr. A. K. Sen (Address : B-24, Gulmohar Park) in relation to inflated electricity bills. (Annexure XIII).
  - (n) We have received a letter dated 20-11-2003 from Mr. A. K. Dutta (Address : 9192 LIG Flat, Vasant Kunj, Masoodpur, New Delhi-110070) in relation to cheating of consumers by BSES Rajdhani in association with Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission, which we had forwarded to Respondent No. 2 *vide* our letter dated 25-11-2003 (Annexure XIV).
  - (o) We have received a letter dated 05-03-2004 from Kalkaji Bhagidari Coordination Committee (Address : 9/7, Kalkaji Extension, New Delhi-110019) stating that they are experiencing problems of inflated bills and average consumption bills. (Annexure XV).
  - (p) We have received a letter dated 19-3-2004 from Greater Kailash-II, Welfare Association (Address : M-75, Greater Kailash II, New Delhi-48) wherein they have furnished comments and observations in relation to inflated electricity bills and dissatisfaction with the functioning of BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. (Annexure XVI).
7. That the Petitioner has brought various inadequacies of functioning of DISCOMs to the notice of Respondents No. 1 & 2 *vide* letter of 27th February, 2004 (Annexure XVII); there has been no reply from either of the Respondents. The Petitioner also attaches herewith newspapers cuttings which have highlighted the problems of consumers in regard to inflated and wrong electricity bills and failure to elicit any positive and concrete response from the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission and DISCOMs. (Annexures XVIII, XIX, XX & XXI).
  8. That the Petitioner also wrote to various Residents Welfare Associations (RWAs) at Delhi asking for information about any complaints received by them from the residents about the electricity bills. The replies received have also been taken into account while submitting above specimens of complaints.
  9. That the present petition, based on the above grounds, is being preferred bonafide, in the interest of justice and in public interest.
  10. That no other Writ Petition or proceeding has been initiated by the Petitioner in any other High Court or in the Supreme Court of India on the issues that are subject matter of the present petition.
  11. That the petitioner has no alternative equally efficacious remedy in law for the cause of action being agitated herein.

#### PRAYERS

In the above premises, it is prayed that this Hon'ble Court be pleased to issue writ, or order in the nature of mandamus and/or any other appropriate writ, order or direction directing the Respondents to effect following alterations in the functioning of Respondents Nos. 3, 4 & 5 (three DISCOMSs) and Respondent No. 2 (Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission) :

- i. in view of the fact that there have been 10,000 / 12,000 written complaints of excessive and wrong billing from consumers of electricity where electro-magnetic meters have been replaced by electronic meters, and there may be many more dissatisfied consumers who have not submitted written complains, it would be appropriate that a committee of technical experts, including those from Bureau of Indian standards, should examine the entire matter immediately and determine whether the already installed electronic meters should be allowed to continue operating; where any meters require to be replaced by electro-magnetic meters this should be done, and meanwhile further replacement of electro-magnetic meters by electronic meters should be stopped till the matter has been examined in detail by Regulatory commission



with the assistance of high-level committee of experts, and steps would be taken to make the operating of electro-magnetic meters totally tamper-proof. A detailed report should be submitted in three months by Respondent No. 2 to the Hon'ble Court.

- ii. Respondent No. 2, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission should be strengthened without any further delay and two additional members be appointed to the commission.
- iii. Respondent No. 2, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission should immediately appoint Committees for redressal of grievances and also appoint ombudsman for hearing complaints of residents; wherever a consumer has suffered due to receipt of wrong bills and not getting the problems satisfactorily resolved, there should be a system of giving compensation to the consumers.
- iv. A CBI enquiry should be directed against the conduct of DISCOMs in relation to metering and billing problems.
- v. In cases where consumers have complained about defective meters / excessive bills, no coercive action including disconnection of electricity should be resorted to by Respondents Nos. 3, 4 & 5 till such time their grievances are redressed satisfactorily.
- vi. In public interest, agreement of the Government of Delhi with DISCOMs be made public; violation of the agreement should be strictly monitored.
- vii. to pass such other and further orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem necessary and proper on the facts and in the circumstances of the case.

For which act of kindness the petitioner shall as has in duty bound ever pray.

Place : New Delhi

Petitioner

The drunk lurched to the elevator, opened the door, and stepped in. Unfortunately, the elevator was not there, and he plopped the six stories to the bottom of the shaft. Dusting himself off, he scowled and shouted, 'Dammit, I said "up"'.  
...

'She told me', a woman complained to a friend, 'that you told her the secret I told you not to tell her'.  
'Well', replied her friend in a hurt tone, 'I told her not to tell you that I told her'.  
'Oh, dear', sighed the first woman. 'Well', don't tell her I told you that she told me'.  
...

A khaddar-clad minister visits a car factory. The manager goes out of the way to show him around and at the end of the tour, offers the minister a free car.

'Oh, no', says the minister, 'I cannot accept it'.

'In that case I'll sell it to you for five hundred rupees'. The minister hands the manager two five-hundred rupee notes. 'In that case, I'll have two.'  
...

A manufacturer was showing a prospective customer from an Iron Curtain country through his factory. When the noon whistle blew and thousands of men hurried away, the visitor was aghast, "They're all escaping!", he cried. "Can't you stop them?"

"Don't worry," the manufacturer said, "They'll come back". The visitor looked at him sceptically. But, when the starting whistle blew, the men returned and set to work. Later in the day, the manufacturer broached the subject of business. "Now," he said, "about those machines you were interested in buying...."

The Iron Curtain customer interrupted him. "We'll talk about that afterwards", he said, "but first tell me how much you want for that whistle!"  
...



## CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT - RULES

Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was amended by the Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act, 2002 (62 of 2002). For facilitating the task of readers we had published the changes at a glance in a tabulated form in our quarterly journal for the period April - June, 2003. Inadvertently, we omitted to mention that Section 12 of the Act had been substituted with a new Section 12 which, inter alia, stipulated that "Every complaint filed under sub-section (1) shall be accompanied with such amount of fee and payable in such manner as may be prescribed". This decision is somewhat unpalatable, and consumer organisations have protested against this provision. In the earlier Act there was no provision of payment of fee for filing a case before District Consumer Forum. The provision has perhaps been made to discourage filing of frivolous cases. The Department of Consumer Affairs (Consumer Protection Unit) has since issued Consumer Protection (Amendment) Rules, 2004 which inter alia include Rule indicating specific amount of fees to be deposited at the time of filing a claim depending on the value of the goods or services and the compensation claimed. A new Rule 9A has been inserted in the Rules in this regard. Rule 9 is reproduced below :-

"9A. Fee for making complaints before District Forum - (1) Every complaint filed under sub-section (1) of section 12 with a District Forum shall be accompanied by a fee, as specified in the table given below, in the form of crossed Demand Draft drawn on nationalised bank or through a crossed Indian Postal Order drawn in favour of the Registrar of the State Commission and payable at the respective place where the State Commission is situated. The concerned District Forum shall deposit the amount of fee so received in the State Government Receipt Account.

TABLE

Sl. No.	Value of goods or services and the compensation claimed	Amount of fee payable
(1)	(2)	(3)
DISTRICT FORUM		
(1)	Upto one lakh rupees	Rs. 100
(2)	One lakh rupees and above but less than five lakh rupees	Rs. 200
(3)	Five lakh rupees and above but less than Rs. 10 lakh	Rs. 400
(4)	Ten lakh rupees and above but not exceeding Rs. 20 lakh	Rs. 500

## MISCELLANEOUS

### MENACE OF STRAY CATTLE ON DELHI ROADS

Readers may be aware that COMMON CAUSE had filed a Writ Petition in the High Court of Delhi for removal of stray cattle, dogs and monkeys from Delhi. High Court of Dehli has been dealing with this case for quite sometime and has also issued series of directions; including re-location of illegal dairies, increase in the number of vehicles engaged in impounding cattle and filing of quarterly progress reports with coordination among MCD / NDMC and DCP of the area. The MCD had increased the fine from Rs. 1400 to Rs. 5000/- per cattle. During the last hearing on 15th April, 2004, the Delhi High Court directed private Power companies to disconnect electricity supply to unauthorised dairies operating



in the city. The Hon'ble Court also directed the police to assist these companies who complained that the dairies continue to steal electricity. The MCD Commissioner assured the court for solving the problem. The MCD undertook to start implementing the orders of the court w.e.f. 27.5.2004. Whereas the impounded cows will be accommodated in Gowshalas, even those located in the States of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the buffaloes would be auctioned with the condition that these will not be re-sold in Delhi. The MCD says that it will remove 40 dairies per week. There are 2718 unauthorised dairies in Delhi. The MCD has to give an action plan for the purpose of removal of illegal dairies, and stray cattle to the High Court by 1st July, 2004. Following this, they have to submit a status report every 3 weeks to the court.

### TRANSFER OF ALLOCATION / ALLOTMENT / FLAT IN CASE OF DEATH

Delhi Development Authority had issued guidelines for transfer of allocation/allotment of flat, in death cases. These, inter alia, stipulated that in addition to Registered 'WILL' the beneficiary will have to submit 'NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE(s)' from other legal heirs. We felt that requirement of submitting 'NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE(s)' may render the execution and registration of 'WILL' redundant if the beneficiary has to submit 'NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE(s)' from other legal heirs. We took up the matter with the Vice-Chairman, DDA vide our letter dated 29th August 2003. On our request, the Vice-Chairman gave a personal hearing to our representative, Mr. N. Ahuja who made a presentation before the Vice-Chairman and other members of the DDA. The DDA has now agreed that where a 'WILL' has been duly registered, the beneficiary will not be required to produce 'NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE(s)' from other legal heirs of the deceased. Relevant extracts from D.O. Letter No. PS/PC/DDA/2004/32-N - dated 26th April, 2004 received from Principal Commissioner, DDA are reproduced below for the information of readers :-

"THIS is in reference to your letter dated 8.4.2004 addressed to the Vice-Chairman, DDA regarding clarification about the guidelines to transfer flat in death cases on the basis of registered 'WILL'. It has been decided that in such cases no objection certificates will not be asked from the other legal heirs in case the 'WILL' is registered in favour of one / few family members. However, as per the Authority Resolution, the person in whose favour registered 'WILL' has been made, he/she will merely inform DDA about the legal heirs in his / her affidavit but NOC from them will not be required."

### CONCESSIONAL MTNL TARIFF FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

We have been informed by the Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, Govt. of India vide his D.O. No. F.4/CH(TC) 2004 dated 8.4.2004 that some privileges have been granted to the senior citizens by MTNL in the tariffs in force from 1.8.2003. These inter alia include 25% concession in monthly rental. The concessions at a glance are :-

Sl. No.	Particulars	Charges to be paid under normal plan, i.e., other than senior Citizens	Charges to be paid by Sr. Citizens -
1.	Installation charges	Rs. 800/-	Rs. 600/-
2.	Security deposit paid in the form of 'Advance Rental'.	Rs. 3000/- (equal to one year advance rental)	Rs. 1125/- (Equal to six months advance rental)
3.	Monthly Rental	Rs. 250/-	Rs. 187.50



General Manager (OOP & C) MTNL, Khurshid Lal Bhawan, New Delhi, has reportedly issued instructions in this regard vide his letter No. GM IT / AOS / MS / 500-20 / 132 dated 31st July, 2003. A subscriber is transferred to the scheme for senior citizens on receipt of an application from the subscriber with relevant documents. For this purpose the subscriber has to file an affidavit-cum-declaration (in the form given below) alongwith other documents, viz.

- 1) Affidavit-cum-Declaration (as given below).
- 2) Proof of age i.e. Date of Birth (Photocopy of PPO or Passport or Election Commission Card etc.)
- 3) A photocopy of the telephone bill last paid.

AFFIDAVIT-CUM-DECLARATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_ son of \_\_\_\_\_ resident  
of \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby solemnly affirm as under :-

1. That I am aged about \_\_\_\_\_ years of age and come into the category of Senior Citizen of India as per Govt. provisions.
2. That I have not availed any facilities of telephone connection in my name under senior citizen category from MTNL in Delhi or outside Delhi / anywhere in India.
3. That I wish to avail of the above facility in respect of the MTNL telephone (No. \_\_\_\_\_ OYT/N-OYT-Gen. Category) under the changed category of 'senior citizen category' under concessional rent basis scheme.

DECLARANT/DEPONENT

VERIFICATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the above-named deponent, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under : that all the contents of the above affidavit are correct and true to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing has been concealed therefrom.

Verified at Delhi on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2004.

DECLARANT/DEPONENT



## NOT TO DO ANYTHING IS MEDITATION

"I am a seeker. I am engaged in spiritual disciplines and I am making progress. One day the attainment is also going to happen." - once a hermit said this to me. In his words I felt more the ring of desire than of spiritual discipline. Such spiritual disciplines are themselves obstacles.

What is there to practice to attain that which already is? It is not even to be attained - only to recognise that it has never been lost. And the whole undertaking of the so-called spiritual practice hides this truth. At the root of this is one's sensual desire, and a wish to attain something, to change something: I am to change from what I am, A is to be changed into B. This duality, this conflict, lies at the root of all sensual desires. This duality is the world and sorrow.

I say: if you desire to be even slightly different from what you are, you are going against what is. And what is, is the path. The moment one wakes up to what is, one's life is filled with a naturalness and beauty; a freedom and liberation permeates one's every breath. This beauty is never available to the so-called practitioner. A violence, a suppression and a kind of lust for becoming destroys that naturalness. Hence, there is an ugliness found in all the so-called aspiring ascetics.

Then what shall we do? Nothing. Not to do, not to do anything, is meditation. The self is neither in doing nor in thoughts. It is discovered the moment actions and thoughts are dispelled.

Drop everything, let go of everything, let everything disappear. And then what is seen in this nothingness, in this emptiness, is everything.



## OUR ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES

COMMON CAUSE, a registered Society with membership all over the country and operating on All India basis, has earned reputation and credibility as an Organisation dedicated to public causes for seeking redress for problems of the people. Its initiative in public interest litigation, for solving the common and collective problems of the people, has greatly contributed to the evolution and spread of the system in the country and its adoption by the people on a substantial scale for effecting redressal of public grievances.

A large number of writ petitions have been filed by the Organisation in the Supreme Court and Delhi High Court, and quite a few important cases have been taken to the National Commission established under the Consumer Protection Act. The very first case taken up by COMMON CAUSE, almost two decades ago soon after its establishment, related to the problems of pensioners. Almost four million pensioners benefited from the three important decisions which the Organisation was able to secure from the Supreme Court, relating to the extension of liberalisation of pension, restoration of commutation of pension and extension of the scheme of family pension. An important

### OUR GRATEFUL THANKS

*We have the privilege of receiving assistance also from the well known Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Foundation which is supporting various projects and activities connected inter alia with consumer awareness, entrepreneurship development, economic and civic education, environment protection, legal services, income generation and rural development. The Foundation is named after the known socio-liberal statesman Friedrich Naumann and works towards his ideals and the vision of Liberal society. In India the Foundation operates from USO House, 6, Special Institutional Area, New Delhi-110067*

matter relating to the pending criminal cases of the courts of the country was taken to the Supreme Court. In our writ petition specific suggestions were submitted for adoption of procedures for dealing with backlog. The important decision given by Supreme Court in this case led to the discharge of large number of accused persons and release of prisoners whose cases had dragged on for long periods. These directions have brought about termination of hundreds of thousands of cases all over the country. On the subject of general malfunctioning of Blood Banks a writ petition was formulated and taken to the Supreme Court. Directions given by the court on this important matter has led to the evolution of system for registration of Blood Banks and stoppage of use of professional blood donors. On the general matter of corruption and establishment of the institutions of LOKPAL and LOK AYUKTAS in the country the Supreme Court, on a writ petition of the organisation, gave a verdict of severe punishment in a particular case, and the matter relating to the appointment of Lok Ayuktas has continued to be pursued by issuing direction to all States. On another writ petition the Supreme Court gave very important direction in relation to the conduct of election campaigns by the political parties, in relation to a provision which has been incorporated in the election law. The Court also directed strict compliance with law in relation to the submission of Income-tax Returns by the political parties.

In Delhi High Court a number of writ petitions have been filed by the organisation. Problems of general importance, such as anomalies arising in the Property Tax and the difficulties encountered in the operation of old Rent Control laws, have been taken up and are being pursued. There has been large-scale theft of electricity in Delhi on account of which electric distribution has often got disrupted and the authority has had to resort to load-shedding; these problems have been taken to Delhi High Court and are being pursued. A major problem in Delhi has been the large-scale establishment of unauthorised residential colonies. There has been demand for their regularisation; this was challenged by the organisation and the matter continues to be further pursued.

An important matter relating to Rail Disasters which have taken place in the country in recent years has also been taken to the Supreme Court. Other important matters recently taken to the Supreme Court include the functioning of Fake Universities and ineligible Teaching shops, Crime and Violence on TV, Telephone freebies to over 3 lakhs employees, required change-over to two Time Zones, and deficiencies found in the implementation of Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme (VDIS) of GOI. The National Commission established under the Consumer Protection Act has, on our submission, issued certain important decisions on matters such as use of iodized salt, stoppage of malfunctioning in relation to intravenous fluids, operation of buses on Delhi roads and strikes by Banks and Air India. Important decisions in general interest of consumers secured from the Supreme Court include establishment of Consumer Forum's in all districts of the country and price printing also on all imported packages.

**Membership of the organisation is open to all. Membership fees are Rs. 100 for annual membership for individuals, Rs. 500 for life membership and Rs. 200 for annual membership of organisations and associations. Quarterly Periodical COMMON CAUSE goes free to all members; it has no separate subscription. Donations to COMMON CAUSE are eligible for exemption available under Section 80-G of Income Tax Act. Everybody can take membership of the organisation. No form is required. Send your name and address, written in capital letters, along with cheque/DD, drawn in favour of COMMON CAUSE.**