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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, CONSUMER AFFAIRS
AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (2023-2024)**

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD
AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS)**

Initiatives in the North East in the Field of Consumer Rights Protection

THIRTY SEVENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2023/ Agrahayana, 1945 (Saka)

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(DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS)**

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 19.12.2023

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.12.2023



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2023/Agrahayana, 1945 (Saka)

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Composition of the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (2023-24)

Smt. Locket Chatterjee - Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Farooq Abdullah
3. Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay
4. Shri Shafiqur Rahman Barq
5. Shri Rajendra Dhedyia Gavit
6. Shri Sanganna Amarappa Karadi
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13. Smt. Kavita Singh
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19. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan
20. Shri Vaithilingam Ve.
21. Vacant

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri Satish Chandra Dubey
23. Dr. Fauzia Khan
24. Shri Rajmani Patel
25. Shri Sakaldeep Rajbhar
26. Dr. Ashok Bajpai
27. Shri Baburam Nishad
28. Shri C. Ve Shanmugam
29. Shri Prakash Chik Baraik
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31. Vacant

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Joint Secretary
2. Dr. Vatsala Joshi - Director
3. Sh. Dong Lianthang Tonding - Deputy Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (2023-24) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Thirty-Seventh Report on the subject, 'Initiatives in the North East in the field of Consumer Rights Protection' pertaining to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs).

2. The subject was selected by the Committee for examination and report. Oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs) was held on 28 June, 2022. For updated information on the subject, another meeting was held with the representatives of the Department on 21 December, 2022.

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Officers of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs) for placing before them the necessary information in connection with the examination of the subject.

4. A Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 18th December, 2023.

5. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations/Comments of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the text of the Report.

**New Delhi;
18 December, 2023
27 Agrahayana, 1945 (Saka)**

**LOCKET CHATTERJEE,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**

REPORT
PART I
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

CONSUMER RIGHTS PROTECTION

Sub-Section 7 of Section 2 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 states that "consumer" means any person who buys any goods or avails of any service for a consideration

1.2 Sub-Section 9 of the Section further states that for the purposes of this clause, "consumer rights" includes,—

- (i) the right to be protected against the marketing of goods, products or services which are hazardous to life and property;
- (ii) the right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods, products or services, as the case may be, so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices;
- (iii) the right to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of goods, products or services at competitive prices;
- (iv) the right to be heard and to be assured that consumer's interests will receive due consideration at appropriate fora;
- (v) the right to seek redressal against unfair trade practice or restrictive trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers; and
- (vi) the right to consumer awareness;

1.3 Under the Act, the Central Consumer Protection Authority has been established to regulate matters relating to violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the interests of public and consumers and to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.

(i) THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.4 With a view to modernise the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and to further strengthen the Act in the new era of globalization, tools and technologies, e-Commerce markets, Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 was passed in the Parliament 09.08.2019. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 has since been implemented w.e.f. 20th July, 2020.

1.5 Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, a three tier-quasijudicial mechanism, called Consumer Commission, has been established at the District, State and National levels to provide speedy, simple and inexpensive resolution of consumer disputes. As per the provisions of the Act, it is the responsibility of the State Governments to establish and effectively run the District Commission and State Commissions in their respective States/UTs. However, to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India has been extending financial assistance under the scheme to strengthen the infrastructure of Consumer Commission so that a minimum level of facilities are made available at each Consumer Commissions, which are required for their effective functioning. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to the State/UT Governments for construction of new buildings of the Consumer Commission, carrying out addition/alteration/renovation of existing building and grant for acquiring non-building assets such as furniture, office equipment, installing CCTV cameras etc.

1.6 The Department has also informed to the Committee that Legal Metrology (Weights and Measures) Laws form the basis of commercial transaction in any civilized society. To ensure accuracy of measurement in such transaction, the Government has enacted legislation namely, the Legal Metrology Act, 2009.

(ii) THE RULES/GUIDELINES

1.7 In connection with the aforementioned legal framework, the following Rules/Regulations/Guidelines have been notified:

I. The Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022.

- II. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (Group 'C' posts) Recruitment Rules, 2022.
- III. The Consumer Protection (Qualification for appointment, method of recruitment, procedure of appointment, term of office, resignation and removal of the president and members of State Commission and District Commission) (Amendment) Rules, 2022.
- IV. The Consumer Protection (Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions) Amendment Rules, 2022.
- V. The Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011
- VI. The Legal Metrology (General) Rules, 2011
- VII. The Legal Metrology (Approval of Models) Rules, 2011
- VIII. The Legal Metrology (National Standards) Rules, 2011
- IX. The Legal Metrology (Numeration) Rules, 2011
- X. The Indian Institute of Legal Metrology Rules, 2011
- XI. The Legal Metrology (Government Approved Test Centre) Rules, 2013.

1.8 The following essential Rules and Regulations under the CP Act have been notified:

Rules

- i. The Consumer Protection (General) Rules, 2020;
- ii. The Consumer Protection (Central Consumer Protection Council) Rules, 2020;
- iii. The Consumer Protection (Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission) Rules, 2020;
- iv. The Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020
- v. The Consumer Protection (Qualification for appointment, method of recruitment, procedure of appointment, term of office, resignation and removal of President and Members of the State Commission and District Commission) Rules, 2020
- vi. The Consumer Protection (Mediation) Rules, 2020
- vii. The Consumer Protection (salary, allowances and conditions of service of President and Members of the State Commission and District Commission) Model Rules, 2020
- viii. CCPA (Annual Report) Rules, 2021
- ix. The Consumer Protection (Search and Seizure and Compounding of offences by the Central Authority and Crediting of Penalty) Rules, 2021

- x. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (Form of annual statement of accounts and records) Rules, 2021
- xi. The Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021
- xii. The Consumer Protection (Jurisdiction of the District Commission, the State Commission and the National Commission) Rules, 2021
- xiii. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (Group 'C' posts) Recruitment Rules, 2022

Regulations

- i. The Consumer Protection (Administrative Control over the State Commission and the District Commission) Regulations, 2020;
- ii. The Consumer Protection (Mediation) Regulations, 2020.
- iii. The Consumer Protection (Consumer Commission Procedure) Regulations, 2020
- iv. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (Allocation and Transaction of Business) Regulations, 2020.
- v. CCPA (Procedure for Engagement of Experts and Professionals) Regulations, 2021.

1.9 The Committee note that under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, a three tier-quasijudicial mechanism, called Consumer Commission, has been established at the District, State and National levels to provide speedy, simple and inexpensive resolution of consumer disputes. The rules/guidelines and regulations have been accordingly notified by the Government. They also note that it is the responsibility of the State Governments to establish and effectively run the District Commissions and State Commissions in their respective States/UTs. Moreover, the Government of India has also been expending financial assistance under the Scheme of Strengthening the Infrastructure of Consumer Commissions. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 may be got implemented in letter and spirit so that the rules, guidelines and regulations are strictly complied with in the execution of the Act. The Central Government should ensure that strengthening of infrastructure of the consumer commissions in the North East States so that the resolution of consumer disputes is speedy, simple and inexpensive in the North Eastern States of the country.

(Recommendation No. 1)

Chapter II

CONSUMER PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

The present Consumer Protection Framework may be represented as under:-



2.2 The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) is empowered to impose penalties to manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading. The Government has informed the Committee that as part of National Consumer Helpline, there is a Zonal Consumer Helpline in Guwahati with success stories from states like Assam, Arunachal and Pradesh and Nagaland. Also there is three tier consumer disputes Redressal machinery at the National, State and District levels where the aggrieved consumer can take up cases. Besides there is also an Alternate Dispute Redress through Mediation.

2.3 The Department has also informed the Committee that the CCPA has been established to regulate matters relating to violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the interests of public and consumers and to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class. The CCPA will be empowered to order discontinuance of unfair trade practice and misleading advertisements and also to impose penalties on manufacturers, endorsers, publishers of misleading advertisements. Taking cognizance of the complaints raised through National Consumer Helplines (NCH), CCPA has issued notices to Ola and Uber, the two online ride hailing platforms for unfair trade practices and violation of consumer rights. A notice was also issued to Naaptol based upon the complaints received through the NCH Portal.

2.4 There are two on-going schemes in North Eastern States (NER) namely (a) Scheme of 'Strengthening Consumer Commission (SCC) under which assistance is provided (b) Confonet under which hardware, software and technical manpower have been provided to the Consumer Commissions. The scheme is being implemented through the National Informatics Centre (NIC). The details of schemes are given as under :

(i) **SCHEME OF STRENGTHENING CONSUMER COMMISSIONS (SCC)**

2.5 As per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the responsibility of establishing consumer commissions at the District and State level lies with the respective State/UT. Consequently, it is also the responsibility of the State Governments to ensure that these Consumer Commissions are provided with the requisite adequate infrastructure so that they function effectively. Inadequate infrastructure at the consumer commissions affects their functioning adversely and is a factor responsible for causing inordinate delay in the disposal of complaints. For sustaining the faith in the consumer disputes redressal machinery, it is imperative that the infrastructural requirements of the consumer commissions are met so that consumer commissions function effectively.

2.6 However, to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, the Central Government has been providing financial assistance to the State Governments under the scheme, 'Strengthening Consumer Commission' for strengthening the infrastructure of Consumer Commissions including establishing of mediation cell to ensure minimum level of facilities to settle consumer disputes, speedy trail and settling the grievances through mediation made available at each Consumer Commission.

2.7 The financial assistance is limited to the creation of built up area of 5000 sq. ft. in respect of District Commission building and 11000 sq. ft. in respect of State Commission building, which include in both cases 1000 sq. ft. for construction of Mediation Cell.

2.8 Assistance for non-building assets is provided for purchase of furniture, computer, office equipment, library books etc within the overall cost ceiling of Rs.25.00 lakh in respect of a State Commission and Rs.10.00 lac in respect of a District Commission. Assistance for installation of CCTV cameras is also provided by the Central Govt.

2.9 Further, in keeping with the Swachhta Mission, assistance from this scheme is also provided to the States/UTs for construction/upgradation of toilets (for three toilets-one for man, one for woman and one for differently abled) in every District Commission @ Rs 25,000/- per toilet.

2.10 On a specific query about release of fund, the Department informed that during the F.Y 2022-23, an amount of ₹ 18.62 Lakh was released to the state of Assam under the scheme. The Department also informed that the proposal of the Government of Sikkim seeking financial assistance for the construction of new building of State Commission was under consideration. The rest of the States either did not seek financial assistance or failed to submit proposals as per mandate of the relevant guidelines.

2.11 As regards the State of Arunachal Pradesh, the Committee were informed that proposal for an amount of Rs.22.59 crore has been received during the FY 2022-23 which has not been approved by the empowered Committee. Similarly, Nagaland's proposal for Rs.9.67 crore for FY 2022-23 was not submitted as per prescribed guidelines due to which clarifications were sought and reply still awaited.

2.12 The Department has also furnished information during the month of November, 2023 about having held several VC meetings with the Nodal officers/authorized officer of all the states/UTs in connection with the utilization of funds and submission of UCs by State Governments the latest round of such meetings held being from 24.05.2022 to 30.05.2022.

(ii) COMPUTERIZATION AND COMPUTER NETWORKING OF CONSUMER FORA IN THE COUNTRY (CONFONET)

2.13 The scheme of 'Computerization and Computer Networking of Consumer Fora (Commissions) in the country, (CONFONET)' was launched during the 10th Plan period in March, 2005. Under the scheme, the Consumer Commissions at all the three tiers throughout the country are to be fully computerized to enable digital access of information and quicker disposal of cases.

2.14 Under the scheme, hardware, software and technical manpower are provided to the Consumer Commissions. The scheme is being implemented through the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

2.15 Under the scheme, an Online Case Monitoring System (OCMS) has been developed and implemented to facilitate entry of consumer cases online in the consumer commissions. Through the portal <http://confonet.nic.in>, consumers have easy access to accurate and dependable information regarding cause lists, judgments, case status and case history. Quick search facility using case number, complainant name, respondent name etc. and free text search for judgments are also available. Auto SMS & E-mail alerts on next date of hearing to all concerned is also available in the Online CMS application software. CONFONET Dashboard for Administrator & for General Public along with Pull SMS facility has also been introduced in the application that one can send SMS to request and get the date of next hearing of his case on his mobile through SMS.

2.16 The consumers who have filed complaints in District Commissions/State Commissions/ National Commission can access all this information digitally from the CONFONET website.

2.17 Asked about the status of implementation of the Scheme of computerization and Computer Networking of Consumer Fora (CONFONET) in North-East States and response to the scheme in these States, the Department furnished the following:-

“Under the scheme of CONFONET, the details of the hardware support provided to the North-Eastern states is as follows:

Reply: Sno	State Name	No. of State Commis sion	No. of District Commis sions	All-in- one Desktop in SC	All-in- one Desktop In District Commis sions	Desktop in SC	Desktop In District Commis sions
1	Arunach al Pradesh	1	10	2	10	3	20
2	Assam	1	23	3	23	7	46
3	Manipur	1	3	2	5	3	9
4	Meghala ya	1	7	2	7	3	14
5	Mizoram	1	8	2	8	3	16
6	Nagalan d	1	7	2	7	3	14
7	Sikkim	1	4	2	4	3	8
8	Tripura	1	4	2	4	3	8
Total:		8	66	17	68	28	135

E-DAAKHIL PORTAL

2.18 Apart from above two schemes, a Consumer Commission online application portal named “edaakhil.nic.in” has been developed to facilitate the consumers/advocates to file the consumer complaint online through the e-Daakhil portal from home or anywhere at their own comfort. This E-daakhil software also provides facility to pay the complaint fees online as well as having option to pay the fees offline with uploading the proof of payment of fee. The pecuniary jurisdiction is decided on the consideration paid on the goods or services procured. No fee is

required to be paid for registering a complaint regarding a product or service below Rs.5,00,000/-

2.19 As of now, the e-Daakhil portal can be accessed in NCDRC and in 35 States Commissions along with all District Commissions of respective States which includes Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tripura States of North-East. The facility of E-Daakhil has been extended for filing both Appeal as well as Revision also.

2.20 Asked about the status of implementation of e- Daakil scheme in NE, the Department of Consumer Affairs replied:

“The E-daakhil portal has been made operational in all the states of the North-East. As on 04.11.2023, the status of cases filed through e-Daakhil portal is as follows:

S. No.	State Name	Registered Users	No. of complaints accepted By Commission out of registered complaints.
1	Assam	1431	85
2	Arunachal Pradesh	104	31
3	Manipur	70	0
4	Mizoram	36	1
5	Tripura	300	37
6	Meghalaya	97	23
7	Nagaland	34	2
8	Sikkim	91	0
Total:		2163	179

2.21 Regarding the manner in which E-daakhil scheme is popularized in North-East States, the Department informed as follows:-

“ Popularization of e-Daakhil scheme in North-East States:

1.The Department is organizing Online training with Consumer Commissions and through online tutorials posted on e-Daakhil portal to educate people about the process of lodging complaints through the e-Daakhil platform. A one-day Regional Workshop was also organized in Guwahati by Department of Consumer Affairs to monitor the consumer cases in which the North-Eastern States participated.

2.Conducting awareness campaigns through hoardings, various media channels, including television, radio, newspapers, and social media platforms, to inform the public about the existence and benefits of the e-Daakhil scheme.”

2.22 The Committee observe that there are two ongoing schemes to strengthen the Consumer Commissions in North Eastern Regions. However, they find that under these schemes during the F.Y 2022-23, an amount of ₹ 18.62 Lakh was released to the state of Assam one proposal each of the Government of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh seeking financial assistance for the State Commission are under consideration and one proposal from Nagaland has been sent back for clarification. The rest of the North Eastern States either did not seek financial assistance or failed to submit proposals seeking assistance under these schemes. The Committee, therefore, recommend that in view of the poor record of seeking financial assistance by the north Eastern States, the Ministry may assess the exact status of consumer Commissions of all the North Eastern States in terms of functioning and availability of infrastructure and persuade the state Governments to strengthen them and provide all necessary Central assistance under the ongoing schemes, so that all the consumer Commissions of North Eastern states are also sufficiently strengthened. The Committee may be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

(Recommendation No. 2)

2.23 The Committee note that the Government is implementing the Computerization and Computer Networking of Consumer Fora in the country (CONFONET) through the National Informatics Centre in the North Eastern States also. The Committee desire that the Government should adopt an integrated

approach in the implementation of the schemes CONFONET in each North Eastern State, so that the consumer commissions are strengthened and empowered with the necessary equipment like computers and devise a mechanism for regular documenting lacunae in the system for eventual rectification of the same.

(Recommendation No. 3)

2.24 The Committee note that the scheme of 'Computerization and Computer Networking of Consumer Fora (Commissions) in the country, (CONFONET)' was launched during the 10th Plan period in March, 2005. Under the scheme, the Consumer Commissions at all the three tiers throughout the country are to be fully computerized to enable digital access of information and quicker disposal of cases. They also note that under the CONFONER an Online Case Monitoring System (OCMS) has been developed and implemented to facilitate entry of consumer cases online in the consumer commissions. There is a quick search facility using case number, complainant name, respondent name etc. and free text search for judgments are also available. Auto SMS & E-mail alerts on next date of hearing to all concerned is also available in the Online CMS application software. CONFONET Dashboard for Administrator & for General Public along with Pull SMS facility has also been introduced in the application that one can send SMS to request and get the date of next hearing of his case on his mobile through SMS. Hardware supports are provided to all State Commissions, 23 District Commissions (DC) in Assam, 10 DC in Arunachal Pradesh, 3 DCs in Manipur, 8 DCs in Mizoram, 7 DC each in Meghalaya and Nagaland and 4 DC each in Tripura and Sikkim. The Committee desire that the Central Government should ensure that all the Districts of the each North Eastern States are equipped with computer hardware to facilitate faster entry of cases and quicker disposal.

(Recommendation No. 4)

2.25 The Committee also note that a Consumer Commission online application portal named "edaakhil.nic.in" has been developed to facilitate the consumers/advocates to file the consumer complaint online through the e-Daakhil portal from home or anywhere at their own comfort. This E-daakhil

software, that provides facility to pay the complaint fees online as well as having option to pay the fees offline with uploading the proof of payment of fee, can be accessed in NCDRC and in 35 State Commissions along with all District Commissions of states of North-East. The facility of E-Daakhil has been extended for filing both Appeal as well as Revision also. The pecuniary jurisdiction is decided on the consideration paid on the goods or services procured. No fee is required to be paid for registering a complaint regarding a product or service below Rs.5,00,000/- . The Committee are impressed to note that the Department is conducting awareness campaigns through hoardings, various media channels, including television, radio, newspapers, and social media platforms, to inform the public about the existence and benefits of the e-Daakhil scheme apart from organizing online tutorials and regional workshops. The Committee further recommend that the awareness campaigns of the Department and concerned State Governments should be more intensified and penetrating got intensified so that awareness about their consumer rights and the e-Daakhil portal will be amplified. The Department should also organize more tutorials and regional workshops to equip the officials to take up the cases more efficiently.

(Recommendation No. 5)

CHAPTER – III

CONSUMER PROTECTION MECHANISMS IN THE NORTH EASTERN REGION

(i) CONSTITUTION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION COUNCILS

Section 6 (3) of Consumer Protection Act, 2019 stipulates that State Consumer Protection Council (SCPCs) shall meet as and when necessary but not less than two meetings per year.

3.2 Asked about the data and details of the number of times the SCPCs met and the major decisions taken in those meetings in NE states during the last three years (year wise and state wise), the Department replied:-

i. **Arunachal Pradesh:** In last two years, due to Covid Lock down, SCPC meeting could not be organised, however State of Arunachal Pradesh has reconstituted its State Consumer Protection Council Member on 9th January, 2023 and will be conducting meeting soon.

ii. **Tripura:** State Consumer Protection Council as per CoPRA, 2019 has not yet constituted in the State.

iii. **Mizoram:** District Consumer Protection Councils have not been formed in the State as the Mizoram Consumer Protection (State Council and District Council) Rules was notified only on 21.08.2023. Additionally, the formation of District Consumer Protection Council has been temporarily halted by the State due to the General Election to the State Legislative Assembly on 07.11.2023.

iv. **Manipur:** State Consumer Protection Council as per CoPRA, 2019 has not yet constituted in the State.

v. **Assam:** State Consumer Protection Council in the State of Assam has been notified vide No.FSA.161/2015/Pt/1 dated 4th July, 2022. However, the first meeting of the said council is yet to be convened.

vi. **Meghalaya:** The State Consumer Protection Council met on the 27th September, 2023. Minutes of the meeting is enclosed.

vii. **Nagaland:** State Consumer Protection Council has not been constituted in the state.

viii. **Sikkim:** State Consumer Protection Council is yet to be formed.”

3.3 Section 8 of Consumer Protection Act, 2019 prescribes that District Consumer Protection Councils (DCPCs) should be established in each and every district .

3.4 Asked about the details of setting of these councils, state-wise, the Department furnished the following information:-

“

Sl No	Name of the State	No of Total districts in the state	No of districts in which DCPCs were established	Reasons for not establishing DCPCs , if any
1.	Tripura	8	Nil	State Rules in this regard Have not yet been framed.
2.	Mizoram	11	Nil	State Rules in this regard Have not yet been framed
3.	Assam	31	23	Rest of the districts are Merged with existing DCPCs.
4.	Meghalaya	12	7	The State Government has instructed all the Deputy

				Commissioners vide Letter No.Sup.10/2021/Pt14/dated 28.03.2021.
5.	Nagaland	16	11	Newly created districts in the 2022.

6.	Sikkim	6	0	Nil
7.	Arunachal Pradesh	25	18	7 new District Commission were notified recently and due to non receipt of fund for construction of District Commission building, no District Commission building Was created.
8.	Manipur	16	1	The Deputy Commissioners of all Districts were informed to constitute District Consumer Protection Council in the Districts under Section 7 & 8 of the Consumer Protection Act 1986 through W/T message no. 30/9/2001-FCS dated 29.01.2013. Information for formation of DCPC was received from only 1 District.

”

3.5 The Committee note that Section 6 (3) of Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (the Act) stipulates that State Consumer Protection Council (SCPCs) shall meet as and when necessary but not less than two meetings per year. They also note that Section 8 of the Act prescribes that District Consumer Protection Councils (DCPCs) should be established in each and every district. The Committee note that the State of Arunachal Pradesh has constituted the State Consumer Protection Council (SCPC) but held no meeting while 18 District Consumer Protection Councils have, however, been constituted in that state. Formation of the Commission at State and District levels are Nil in Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim. Manipur and Nagaland have one and eleven District Commissions each without having constituted the SCPC. As regards the State of Assam, it has

constituted the SCPC but not held any meeting yet. It is only the State of Meghalaya that has constituted the SCPC and held meeting at all. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Central Government should see that the mandates of Section 6(3) and 8 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is fulfilled in each of the States of the North East so that the consumers in the region feel assured of their rights and have a sense of belonging with the rest of the country.

(Recommendation No. 6)

(ii) **LOCATION OF DISTRICT COMMISSIONS**

3.6 Section 28(1) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 states:

“The State Government shall, by notification, establish a District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, to be known as the District Commission, in each district of the State:

Provided that the State Government may, if it deems fit, establish more than one District Commission in a district.”

3.7 The Department of Consumer Affairs has informed the Committee that in Mizoram, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya all District Commissions are located in the concerned District Headquarters. It also stated that in Meghalaya and Sikkim due to creation of new Districts, some Districts Commissions could not be located in the District Headquarters. The Department also informed that a District Commission in Tripura is situated outside the District Headquarter i.e. Ambassa.

3.8 As regards Manipur, the Department has informed in a written reply with regard to the issue when asked whether the District Commissions of the State are located in the District Headquarters or not that the District Commission of Imphal is located in the State Capital, Imphal West.

3.9 Asked whether the Department of Consumer Affairs has information about the names of Districts of the States of the North East and location of District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of each District, State-wise, the Department furnished the following reply:

“(i). Tripura: There are 8 Districts in the state, namely, West Tripura, Gomati, Dhalai, Khowai, North Tripura, South Tripura and Unakoti. Presently, there are one State Commission and 4 District Commissions in the State. State Commission is located at Agartala, West District Commission is located at Agartala, Gomati District Commission is located at Udaipur, Dhalai District Commission is located at Kamalpur and Unakoti District Commission is located at Kailashahar.

(ii). Mizoram: There are 11 Districts in the state, namely, Aizawl, Lunglei, Siaha, Champhai, Kolasib, Serchhip, Mamit, Lawngtlai, Hnahthial, Saitual and Khawzawl. Presently, there is 1 State Commission and 11 District Commissions within the state. These are located in Aizawl, Mamit, Saitual, Champhai, Hanhthial, Khawzawl, Kolasib, Serchhip, Lunglei, Saiha and Lawngtlai.

(iii). Assam: There are 31 districts in the state, namely, Baksha, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Cachar, Charaideo, Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, DimaHasao, Goalpara, Golaghat, Hailakandi, Jorhat, Kamrup, KarbiAnglong, Karimganj, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, Sivasagar, Sonitpur, South Salmara-Mankachar, Tinsukia, Udalguri and West KarbiAnglong. There are 23 nos. of District Commissions in Assam. They are located in the Districts of Kamrup, Cachar, Kokrajhar, Nalbari, Bongaigaon, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Sonitpur, Darrang, Morigaon, Nagaon, Golaghat, Sivasagar, Tinsukia, Dhubri, KarbiAnglong, DimaHasao, Goalpara, Hailakandi, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Barpeta and Karimganj.

(iv). Meghalaya: There are 12 Districts in the state, namely, East Khasi Hills, West Garo Hills, West Jaintia Hills, Ri-Bhoi, West Khasi Hills, East Garo Hills, South West Garo Hills, South Garo Hills, Eastern West Khasi Hills, East Jaintia Hills, North Garo Hills and South West Khasi Hills. There are 7 District Commissions in Meghalaya. They are located in the districts of East Garo Hills, East Khasi Hills, West Jaintia Hills, Ri-Bhoi, South Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and West Khasi Hills.

(v). Arunachal Pradesh: There are 26 Districts in the state, namely, Anjaw, Capital Complex Itanagar, Changlang, Dibang Valley, East Kameng, East Siang, Kamle, KraDaadi, KurungKumey, LepaRada, Lohit,

Longding, Lower Dibang Valley, Lower Siang, Lower Subansiri, Namsai, PakkeKessang, Papum Pare, Shi Yomi, Siang, Tawang, Tirap, Upper Siang, Upper Subansiri, West Kameng and West Siang. There are 25 District Commissions in the state. These are located in Tawang, East Kameng, West Kameng, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, West Siang, KurungKumey, East Siang, Yingkiong, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, Changlang, Tirap, Namsai, Anjaw and Lower Dibang Valley.

(vi). Manipur: There are 16 districts in the state, namely, Bishnupur, Chandel, Churachandpur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Senapati, Tamenglong, Thoubal, Ukhrul, Kangpokpi, Tengnoupal, Pherzawl, Noney, Kamjong, Jiribam and Kakching. There are three District Commissions in the state. These are located in Imphal, Bishnupur and Thoubal.

(vii). Sikkim: There are 6 districts in the state, namely, Pakyong, Mangan, Mangan, Namchi, Gyalshing and Soreng. There are 4 District Commissions in the state. These are located in Gangtok, TikjukGyalshing, Mangan and Namchi.

(viii). Nagaland: The state has 16 districts, namely, Chümoukedima, Dimapur, Kiphire, Kohima, Longleng, Mokokchung, Mon, Niuland, Noklak, Peren, Phek, Shamator, Tuensang, Tseminyü, Wokha and Zünheboto. There are 8 District Commissions in the state. These are located in Dimapur, Kohima, Phek, Mokokchung, Wokha, Mon, Tuensang and Zunheboto.

(iii) PECUNIARY JURISDICTION

3.10 As regards the pecuniary jurisdiction, the Department informed as follows:

Level	Amount (in Rupees)
District Commission	Up to Rs 1 crore
State Commission	Beyond Rs 1 crore up to Rs 10 crore
National Commission	Beyond Rs 10 crore

3.11 However, State Governments/Consumer Commissions etc, requested for reduction of the limit of the pecuniary jurisdiction of the District Commissions reasoning

that it is on the higher side and the infrastructure of the District Commissions are not resourceful to adjudicate the cases worth Rs. 1 crore.

3.12 The matter was duly considered and after stakeholder's consultations, the pecuniary jurisdiction of the District Commission and consequent revision of the other State and National Commission has been done vide notification dated 30.12.2021 as follows:

Level	Amount (in Rupees)
District Commission	Upto 50 Lakhs
State Commission	Beyond Rs 50 lakhs up to Rs 2 crore
National Commission	Beyond Rs 2 crore

3.13 The Committee note that Section 28(1) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides for the establishment of District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in each district of the State. They also note with appreciation the conformance of States to the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 with regard to setting up of District Commissions in each district of the States. With some District Commissions that hear and decide cases in other locations due to various reasons, the Committee are hopeful of the complete compliance of the mandate of the Act. The Committee desire the Department to delve deeper into the issue and make all arrangements to ensure that consumer disputes cases are heard and decided in the District Commissions located in the District Headquarters of old or new districts of North Eastern States itself for the convenience of the aggrieved consumers. It may also be ensured that the authorities decide cases as per the pecuniary jurisdictions upto Rs. 50 Lakh so that they may not burden themselves with disputes of higher value.

(Recommendation No. 7)

CHAPTER - IV

STRENGTHENING OF LEGAL METROLOGY WITH REFERENCE TO THE NORTH EAST

Under the Scheme “Legal Metrology and Quality Assurance” there are following three sub-schemes:

- (i) Strengthening of the Legal Metrology Regulation and Enforcement.
- (ii) Strengthening of the NTH
- (iii) Setting up of Gold Hallmarking/ Assaying Centres in India

(i) STRENGTHENING LEGAL METROLOGY REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

4.2 The Legal Metrology scheme aims to fulfill the legislative mandate, protect consumers from being short changed by wrong measurement, provide impetus to the governance priorities of transparency and ease of doing business and provide for Indian Standards and enhance accuracy of measurement of time.

4.3 The Central Government has established six Regional Reference Standards Laboratories (RRSLs) at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Faridabad, Varanasi and Guwahati. These RRSLs serve as a vital link in dissemination of the values of national standards of Legal Metrology down to the commercial level. One more laboratory at Nagpur, (Maharashtra) is being established. The laboratories maintain Reference Standards of appropriate accuracy for Verification of Legal standards of the States, Calibration of weighing and measuring instruments, Model approval tests of weighing and measuring instruments, Training and Seminars on weights and measures. Each laboratory provides calibration service to the industries in the region.

4.4 The Department has informed the Committee that it is Strengthening Legal Metrology infrastructure in the States by means of construction of Secondary Standard and Working Standard Laboratories, by providing equipment to ensure enhanced activity and higher reliability of verifications and by capacity building of officers. During the last three years around 23% of the total Grant in Aid from Legal Metrology has been provided in this scheme to the North Eastern States. Out of total Grant in aid of Rs 10.65 crore around Rs 2.5 crore have been given to the North Eastern States. The utilization certificate of Rs 2.359 crore is pending

from the North Eastern States. The Working /Secondary laboratories so constructed are essential for the verification and calibration of the commercial weights and measures in the markets.

4.5 In the North East, the Regional Reference Standard Laboratory is situated at Guwahati, Assam. During last three years around 6% of the total Grant in Aid from Legal Metrology has been provided in Strengthening of RRSL Guwahati. Out of total Grant in aid in this scheme of Rs 25 crore around Rs 1.5 crore have been given to RRSL Guwahati.

(ii) UTILIZATION CERTIFICATES PENDING STATE WISE

4.6 The Department of Consumer Affairs have furnished the details of Utilization Certificates with respect to strengthening of legal metrology pending against each State of the North East as follows:

(Rs in crores)

S.No.	Name of state/UT	2012-13			2013-14			2014-15			2015-16			2016-17		
		Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC
		Released	recieved	pending	Released	recieved	pending	Released	recieved	pending	Released	recieved	pending	Released	recieved	pending
1	Arunachal Pradesh	1.5	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Assam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
3	Manipur	0.6	0	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Meghalaya	0.75	0.75	0	2	2	0	1.29	0	1.29	0.21	0	0.21	0	0	0
5	Mizoram	0	0	0	1.49	1.49	0	0.71	0.71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Nagaland	1.25	0	1.25	2.5	1.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.95	0	1.95	0	0	0
8	Tripura	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1.59	1.36	0.23	0	0	0
	TOTAL	4.1	2.25	1.85	7.99	6.99	1	2	0.71	1.29	3.75	1.36	2.39	2	0	2

2017-18			2018-19			2019-20			2020-21			2021-22			Total Grant in Aid released	UC Pending
Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC	Grant	UC	UC		
Released	recieved	pendi	Released	reciev	Pendi	Released	reciev	Pendi	Released	reciev	pendi	Released	reciev	pendi		
															1.5	0
															2	2
1.25	0	1.25													1.85	1.85
															4.25	1.5
1.6	1.6	0	1.65	1.65	0				1	0	1				6.45	1
															3.75	2.25
															1.95	1.95
			0.35	0	0.35	0.5	0.14	0.36	1	0	1				5.44	1.94

2.85	1.6	1.25	2	1.65	0.35	0.5	0.14	0.36	2	0	2					27.19	12.49
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4.7 The Committee note that Legal Metrology infrastructure scheme aims to fulfill the legislative mandate, protect consumers from being short changed by wrong measurement, provide impetus to the governance priorities of transparency and ease of doing business and provide for Indian Standards and enhance accuracy of measurement of time. They also note that strengthening Legal Metrology infrastructure in the States is carried on by means of construction of Secondary Standard and Working Standard Laboratories, by providing equipment to ensure enhanced activity and higher reliability of verifications and by capacity building of officers. In the North East, the Regional Reference Standards Laboratory (RRSL) is situated at Guwahati, Assam. This is apart from the other RRSLs located at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar and Faridabad. Two more laboratories at Varanasi, (Uttar Pradesh) and Nagpur, (Maharashtra) are being established. These RRSLs serve as a vital link in dissemination of the values of national standards of Legal Metrology down to the commercial level. During last three years out of total Grant in aid in this scheme of Rs 25 crore around Rs 1.5 crore have been given to RRSL Guwahati. The Committee desire that apart from Guwahati (Assam), given the geographical size of the North Eastern Region, the Government should select suitable locations in the North Eastern Region for setting up of more RRSLs which will go a long way in promoting the policy of Act East Policy of for eventual integration of the region with the rest of the country.

(Recommendation No. 8)

4.8 The Committee note that Legal Metrology scheme aims to fulfill the legislative mandate, protect consumers from being short changed by wrong measurement, provide impetus to the governance priorities of transparency and ease of doing business and provide for Indian Standards. Objectives of the scheme include Strengthening Legal Metrology infrastructure in the States. The Committee also note that during the last 10 years an amount of Rs. 27.19 Crore Grant in Aid for Legal Metrology was released in the region out of which Utilisation Certificate of Rs. 12.49 Crore is still pending. Except the State of Arunachal Pradesh, most of the States don't furnish UC for major part of the Grant received by them. Against the States of Assam, Manipur and Sikkim 100% of the grant released are still pending. The Committee therefore desire that the Department should ensure the strengthening of Legal Metrology infrastructure in each state of North East with proper and full utilization of the funds provided for that purpose.

(Recommendation No. 9)

CHAPTER - V

PRICE RISE

The Department of Consumer Affairs has informed the Committee that the daily retail and wholesale prices of 22 essential food commodities are collected through mobile app. from 550 price reporting centres in the country.

(i) PRICE REPORTING CENTRES

5.2 The wholesale prices are collected from the one wholesale market situated in price reporting centres. In respect of retail price, prices are collected from three markets and then the average of these markets is taken. The State-wise list of the price reporting centres in the North East States are as follow:

List of Price Reporting Centres in North East States

State	S.No.	Centre Name
Arunachal Pradesh	1	Pasighat
	2	Namsai
	3	Itanagar
	4	Tawang
Assam	5	Bajali
	6	Mushalpur
	7	Barpeta
	8	BiswanathChariali
	9	BONGAIGAON
	10	Sonari
	11	Mangaldai
	12	Dhubri
	13	Dibrugarh
	14	Haflong
	15	Goalpara
	16	Golaghat
	17	Hojai
	18	Jorhat
	19	Kamrup
	20	Guwahati
	21	DIPHU KARBI AGLONG
	22	Karimganj
	23	Lakhimpur
	24	Majuli
	25	Morigaon
	26	Nalbari
	27	Sivasagar
	28	Sonitpur, Tezpur
Manipur	29	MANKACHAR
	30	Tinsukia
	31	Tamulpur
	32	Udalgiri
	33	Chandel
	34	Imphal
	35	Jiribam
	36	Kangpokpi
37	Senapati	
38	Tamenglong	
39	Thoubal	
40	Ukhrul	
Meghalaya	41	Mairang
	42	Williamnagar
	43	Khliehriat
	44	Shillong
	45	Sohra
	46	Nongpoh
	47	Mawkyrwat
	48	Tura
	49	Jowai
	50	Nongstoin
Mizoram	51	Aizawl
	52	Champhai
	53	Hnahthial
	54	Khawzawl
	55	Kolasib
	56	Lawngtlai
	57	Lunglei
	58	Mamit

	59	Siaha
	60	Saitual
	61	Serchip
Nagaland	62	Chumukedima
	63	Dimapur
	64	Kiphire
	65	Kohima
	66	Longleng
	67	Mokochung
	68	Mon
	69	Niuland
	70	Noklak
	71	Peren
	72	Phek

	73	Shamator
	74	Tseminyu
	75	Tuensang
	76	Wokha
	77	Zunheboto
Sikkim	78	Gangtok
	79	Gyalshing
	80	Mangan
	81	Namchi
	82	Soreng
Tripura	83	Udaipur
	84	Dharmanagar
	85	Belonia
	86	Agartala

5.3 In spite of having huge population, the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura are having only one price reporting centre each. Asked about the comments, the Department of Consumer Affairs furnished the following:

“The Department of Consumer Affairs has decided to cover all the districts in the country under price monitoring. In this regard, Secretary, DoCA wrote to all the Chief secretaries of States/UTs, including the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, requesting them to set up price monitoring centre in each of the district, vide D.O. letter dated 28/06/2022. Number of Price Reporting Centres in Arunachal Pradesh (4), Manipur (8), Mizoram (11), and Tripura (4) has increased.”

5.4 The Committee note that the Price Monitoring Division of the Department of Consumer Affairs monitors prices prevailing in the country from 184 centres which includes 86 centres from the North-Eastern States. While expressing their appreciation for the Department of Consumer Affairs for monitoring prices prevailing in the Northeast from 86 centres, the Committee desire that such centres in the Northeast may be made functional and their uses, optimized.

(Recommendation No. 10)

(ii) MARKET VISITS

5.5 Asked about visits by the Price Monitoring Division (PMD) team in the Department of Consumer Affairs to any market in any Price Reporting Centre in the North East States, the Department replied as follows:

“The Department of Consumer Affairs has intimated the Committee that a Two days’ zonal conference cum training program had been conducted in Shillong, Meghalaya during the 2019-20. The basic objective of the conference was to impart the training to officers who handle the daily price reporting. The officers from each North-Eastern region had participated in this training program. The market visit was also part of this program.”

(iii) BANDHS AND STRIKES IN THE NORTHEAST AREAS

5.6 Unlike the other parts of the country, the States in the Northeastern part of the country are witness to peculiar incidents. Asked whether bandhs and strikes have led to price rise of essential commodities in the North Eastern region of the country, the Department replied that there was no such impact study available with the department of Consumer Affairs.

(iv) PRICES OF COMMODITIES

5.7 As regards prices of essential commodities prevailing in various parts of the country including North Eastern region the Department of Consumer Affairs has furnished the following information, on 14 June, 2022:

“All-India Average Retail prices of five zones during last 3 years and the current year (average of Calendar year) are as follows:

Cereals														
Rice	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Wheat	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Atta (Wheat)	2019	2020	2021	2022*
NORTH ZONE	29.55	30.79	32.82	32.8	NORTH ZONE	21.55	22.4	22.29	23.51	NORTH ZONE	24.7	25.92	25.92	27.43
WEST ZONE	28.95	31.34	34.99	33.88	WEST ZONE	24.87	26.72	26.16	28.35	WEST ZONE	26.6	29.02	29.69	31.74
EAST ZONE	29.76	30.08	32.11	33.6	EAST ZONE	25.72	26.14	23.55	25.18	EAST ZONE	26.1	27.02	26.45	28.57
NORTH-EAST ZONE	34.22	34.12	33.13	31.1	NORTH-EAST ZONE	32.74	32.57	30.38	31.15	NORTH-EAST ZONE	31	34.35	31.12	32.27
SOUTH ZONE	37.04	42.21	44.33	44.11	SOUTH ZONE	32.93	34.46	34.89	36.07	SOUTH ZONE	34.5	37.9	40.58	40.99

Pulses														
Gram Dal	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Tur/ArharDal	2019	2020	2021	2022*	UradDal	2019	2020	2021	2022*
NORTH ZONE	63.8	65.32	74.06	73.57	NORTH ZONE	81.06	93.93	106.6	104	NORTH ZONE	74.6	99.92	106.9	104.6
WEST ZONE	62.65	66.36	75.06	72.25	WEST ZONE	78.4	92.47	104.1	100.4	WEST ZONE	65.9	90.11	100.4	99.23
EAST ZONE	64.48	67.42	71.98	71.01	EAST ZONE	79.92	90.08	101.9	99.36	EAST ZONE	74.9	95.99	104	101.6
NORTH-EAST ZONE	71.49	75.03	80.51	81.08	NORTH-EAST ZONE	86.78	104.4	111.2	110.2	NORTH-EAST ZONE	87.8	104.3	113.3	112.8

SOUTH ZONE	71	72.31	78.98	78.86	SOUTH ZONE	85.37	99.91	108.3	105.4	SOUTH ZONE	89.6	115.9	118.1	113.1
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MoongDal	2019	2020	2021	2022*	MasoorDal	2019	2020	2021	2022*
NORTH ZONE	78.23	100.5	102.2	100.9	NORTH ZONE	63.33	74.31	88.66	96.39
WEST ZONE	76.08	96.47	100.3	98.24	WEST ZONE	57.88	68.92	85.17	92.55
EAST ZONE	81.7	99.79	102.5	100.6	EAST ZONE	61.47	74.69	87.34	93.21
NORTH-EAST ZONE	92.84	116.2	109.4	110.6	NORTH-EAST ZONE	71.27	84.51	96.01	102.4
SOUTH ZONE	85.99	110.8	108.8	106.9	SOUTH ZONE	66.17	77.28	91.78	103.1

Edible Oils														
Groundnut Oil (Packed)	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Mustard Oil (Packed)	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Vanaspati (Packed)	2019	2020	2021	2022*
	NORTH ZONE	138.9	146.4	180.3		189.9	NORTH ZONE	106.2	122		169.5	185.6	NORTH ZONE	86
WEST ZONE	121.4	141.2	171.7	178.9	WEST ZONE	103.3	114.6	163.1	181.4	WEST ZONE	74.6	83.89	124.9	145.7
EAST ZONE	130.2	142.3	178.5	196.3	EAST ZONE	105.3	120.6	175.2	186.6	EAST ZONE	76.5	90.12	129.2	146.9
NORTH-EAST ZONE	114.4	133.1	161.2	186.8	NORTH-EAST ZONE	104.6	120.3	165.6	183	NORTH-EAST ZONE	83.6	90.11	134.3	155.1
SOUTH ZONE	131.6	154.5	177.4	184.7	SOUTH ZONE	127.5	135.5	174.5	202.5	SOUTH ZONE	82.8	94.23	131.9	156.8
Soya Oil (Packed)	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Sunflower Oil (Packed)	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Palm Oil (Packed)	2019	2020	2021	2022*
NORTH ZONE	94.46	107.3	146.8	161.1		NORTH ZONE	105.7	121.4	167.2		179.2	NORTH ZONE	81.7	94.86
WEST ZONE	87.97	97.17	141.2	155.8	WEST ZONE	94	105.3	159.6	168.2	WEST ZONE	75.7	86.06	118.7	136.2

EAST ZONE	94.77	106.8	153.7	163.2	EAST ZONE	102.4	117.1	171.9	182.7	EAST ZONE	75	92.33	131.9	143.8
NORTH-EAST ZONE	100.9	113.1	154.9	162.5	NORTH-EAST ZONE	114.7	127.2	177.6	190.7	NORTH-EAST ZONE	102	112.3	128	147
SOUTH ZONE	87.36	90.59	142.8	160	SOUTH ZONE	95.61	112.5	157.2	173.3	SOUTH ZONE	73.1	93.05	130.2	148.2

Vegetables														
Potato	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Onion	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Tomato	2019	2020	2021	2022*
NORTH ZONE	16.36	28.68	18.83	17.64	NORTH ZONE	32.55	35.58	33.27	29.09	NORTH ZONE	33.2	36.45	34.51	32.43
WEST ZONE	17.83	29.64	21.05	20.73	WEST ZONE	28.68	34.33	29.17	27.01	WEST ZONE	27.3	31.6	28.29	30.12
EAST ZONE	13.97	26.55	16.3	17.25	EAST ZONE	31.7	33.86	31.44	28.89	EAST ZONE	32.9	37.33	34.32	31.12
NORTH-EAST ZONE	21.93	35.25	22.61	24.42	NORTH-EAST ZONE	41.11	46.63	43.89	40.71	NORTH-EAST ZONE	46.7	53.53	41.75	47.07
SOUTH ZONE	25.01	36.73	28.88	29.65	SOUTH ZONE	35.59	35.95	33.35	29.47	SOUTH ZONE	27	26.26	30.74	35.94

Others														
Sugar	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Gur	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Milk @	2019	2020	2021	2022*
NORTH ZONE	38.36	39.08	40.72	41.76	NORTH ZONE	38.8	41.83	44.2	44.69	NORTH ZONE	44.6	46.74	50.78	53.51
WEST ZONE	37.21	38.61	39.75	40.14	WEST ZONE	41.26	43.75	45.39	45.18	WEST ZONE	44.7	46.47	50.17	51.92
EAST ZONE	39.56	40.07	41.27	42.24	EAST ZONE	41.89	44.7	43.63	45.11	EAST ZONE	38.6	42.02	46.45	48.48
NORTH-EAST ZONE	44.72	45.87	45.13	45.81	NORTH-EAST ZONE	62.03	64.2	60.92	68.09	NORTH-EAST ZONE	57.5	60.22	63.64	66.15

SOUTH ZONE	37.97	39.81	39.69	39.85	SOUTH ZONE	49.89	55.11	54.51	53.56	SOUTH ZONE	42.3	45.94	46.47	46.12
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Tea Loose	2019	2020	2021	2022*	Salt Pack (Iodised)	2019	2020	2021	2022*
NORTH ZONE	208.8	219.3	269.5	280.9	NORTH ZONE	18.37	19.54	20.84	22.33
WEST ZONE	215.4	222.8	289.9	291.3	WEST ZONE	14.19	14.91	17.29	17.77
EAST ZONE	201.3	211.9	265.7	268.5	EAST ZONE	15.06	15.16	17.89	19.17
NORTH-EAST ZONE	247.6	260.7	306.7	308.9	NORTH-EAST ZONE	15.7	16.92	16.85	18.08
SOUTH ZONE	212.3	230.7	290.7	297.5	SOUTH ZONE	13.77	15.19	16.57	17.34

2022* - Till 14th June, 2022

5.8 When asked about the reasons for higher prices of gram dal, tur/ arhar, moongdal, masoordal, soya oil, sunflower oil prevailing in the region, compared to prices prevailing in other regions of the country during the last 3 years, the Department of Consumer Affairs stated in a written reply:

“The prices of commodities are normally higher in consuming States as compared to producing States due to transportation and other logistics costs. As the North Eastern States are largely consuming States and also located far away from major producing and processing areas for commodities such as gram dal, turdal, moongdal, masoordal, soya oil, sunflower oil, the prices tends to be higher.

Further, prices of essential food commodities are volatile as they tend to get affected by several factors, such as mismatch in demand and supply, seasonality, supply chain constraints, artificial shortage created by hoarding and black marketing, rise in international prices etc. Sometimes slight disruptions in supply chain or damage due to heavy rains leads to spike in prices of agri-horticultural commodities.”

5.9 The Committee note that prices of commodities are normally higher in consuming States such as the North East area as compared to producing States due to transportation and other logistics costs. In this connection, the information upto 14 June, 2022 as given by the Department, has given a clear picture of the situation. The Committee also note that normal life of consumers in the Northeastern region is often, marred by recurrent bandhs and strikes. However, there is no impact study on such bands and strikes. As a result, prices of essential commodities see an abnormal increase in the region. Besides slight disruptions in supply chain or damage due to heavy rains leads to spike in prices of agri-horticultural commodities. The Committee desire the Central Government to take up the matter with a view to bring about positive change, in the interest of the consumers living in the North East areas of the country who have to pay higher prices for commodities of daily consumption due to various factors.

(Recommendation No. 11)

CHAPTER – VI

CONSUMER WELFARE FUND

Grants from Consumer Welfare Fund given to States/Uts for creating a State/UT level Consumer Welfare (Corpus) Fund up to a seed money up to Rs. 20.00 Crore. The contribution of Centre and State/UT is in the ratio of 75:25 (90:10 in the case of Special Category States/Uts/NER), in the corpus. The money is to be deposited in a dedicated interest bearing bank account in any Nationalized Bank to be opened and operated by the concerned State/UT. The concerned State/UT government has to furnish to the Central Government, details of interest accrued, activities undertaken out of the above interest, Audited statement of accounts, details of the account, proof of the State share deposited etc. as required by the Central Government.

6.2 States can frame their own guidelines which should be consistent with guidelines framed by Gol. The interest generated out of the Corpus Fund is to be used by the State/UT for consumer welfare activities as per the extant CWF Guidelines and directions of the Central Government. 24 States/UTs have set up the fund amounting to Rs.328.06 Crores out of which the share of Department of Consumer Affairs is Rs.245.68 Crores. Out of Rs. 245.68 Crore, an amount of Rs. 53.66 Crore is given to seven North East States viz. Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura which is 21.84% of the State Corpus fund released.

6.3 The Ministry furnished the following statement showing the details of Physical/financial utilization of corpus fund and sanctioned amount & UC status as per documents submitted by States of the North-East to whom grants have been released for creating the State CWF.

S.No.	State Govt.	Whether 25%/ 10% as State Share has been deposited	Amount released so far to the States (Rs. in crore) along with the date	Details of Interest Accrued on Corpus Fund.	Physical/Financial Utilization of the interest earned on the Corpus Fund allocated to the State	UC status
1.	NAGALAND	Yes (Rs. 1 crore i.e. 10% of 10 Crores)	Rs. 2.63 crores (31.12.12) Rs. 2.38 crores (15.09.14) Rs. 1.00 crore (04.01.16) Rs. 2.39 crores (30.03.17) Rs. 0.60 crore (27.09.17) =Rs. 9.00 crores	Rs.2,53,68,026	Rs.1,91,53,000	Furnished
2.	SIKKIM	Yes (Rs. 50 lakh i.e. 10% of Rs. 5 Crores)	Rs. 4.5 crores (23.07.2019) Rs.2.25 crores (24.11.2022) = Rs.6.75 crores	Rs.42,18,487	Rs.19,32,032/- spent till 31.10.2023	Furnished
3.	MIZORAM	Yes (Rs.20 lakh i.e. 10% of Rs. 2 crore)	Rs. 1.80 crores (16.03.2020) Rs.2.00 crores (03.11.2022) Rs.0.1113 crores (13.02.2023) = Rs.3.9113 crores	Rs.26,85,209	Rs.75,000	Furnished

4.	TRIPUR A	Yes Rs. 2 crores(Rs. 2 crore i.e. 10% of Rs. 20 Crores)	Rs. 18.00 crores (31.08.2021)	Rs.1,93,06,048	Rs.17,44,619	Finished
5.	Aruna chal Prade sh		Rs.2.00 (07.02.2023) Rs.2.00 crores (14.06.2023) = Rs.4.00 crores	--	--	The UC is not due as the fund was released only in the last financial year.
6.	Meghala ya		Rs.2.00 crores (09.11.2022)	--	--	The UC is not due as the fund was released only in the current financial year.
7	Assam		Rs.10.00 crores (25.05.2023)	--	--	The UC is not due as the fund was released only in the current financial year.
			Rs.53.6613 Crores			

6.4 The Department also stated as follows:

“Deptt. of Consumer Affairs vigorously following up for setting up of Consumer Welfare(Corpus) Funds with all States including North East States. So far 7 States of North East have already Consumer Welfare(Corpus) Funds out of which 03 States established their Consumer Welfare(Corpus) Fund during 2022-23 and 2023-24 only. Further, State Governments and UT Administrations are continuously pursued and reminded through D.O letters from the level of Additional Secretary(CA) and Joint Secretary(CA) to establish Consumer Welfare (Corpus) Fund in their States/UTs at the earliest. They have been reminded through the latest D.O. letter on 10th August, 2023.”

6.5 The Committee are happy to note that grants is given from Consumer Welfare Fund given to States/UTs for creating a State/UT level Consumer Welfare (Corpus) Fund up to a seed money up to Rs. 20.00 Crore and the contribution of Centre and State/UT is in the ratio of 90:10 in for states of the North Eastern Region in the corpus. The money is to be deposited in a dedicated interest bearing bank account in any Nationalized Bank to be opened and operated by the concerned State/UT States can frame their own guidelines which should be consistent with guidelines framed by GoI. The interest generated out of the Corpus Fund is to be used by the State/UT for consumer welfare activities as per the extant CWF guidelines and directions of the Central Government. 24 States / UTs that have set up Consumer welfare (Corpus Fund) amounting to Rs. 32806 Lakhs out of which the share of financial assistance of DoCA is Rs. 24568 Lakhs.

Out of the Rs. 24568 Lakhs, the share of 7 States of the North East namely, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam is 21.84% of the amount which is Rs. 5366 Lakhs. The Committee desire the Department to continue to follow up with States not yet setting up the fund and also desire that the Central Government should monitor the manner of utilization of the fund so that a clear picture of the worth of the fund may be visible.

(Recommendation No. 12)

CHAPTER - VII

CONSUMER AWARENESS (PUBLICITY) PROGRAMME

(i) FUNDS ALLOCATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The Department informed the Committee having released grant-in-aid to States/UTs for generating consumer awareness. The details of grant-in-aid released to North-eastern States since 2014-15 till date is given by the Department is as follows:-

S. No.	Name of State	Since 2014-15 Amount (in Rs)	Last 3 years
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	79,95,221.00	NIL
2.	Assam	29,93,182.00	NIL
3.	Manipur	Nil	NIL
4.	Meghalaya	1,00,00,000.00	40,00,000
5.	Mizoram	80,00,000.00	40,00,000
6.	Nagaland	1,60,00,000.00	40,00,000
7.	Tripura	1,44,82,000.00	80,00,000
8.	Sikkim	1,70,96,157.00	40,00,000

7.2 A media campaign for publicizing NCH new helpline number 1915 and E-Daakhil was run / is being run through laptop branding, mug branding, weather report / news report captions, animated bug logo insertion on DD News and DD Kisan. Video spots have been run during Swaraj and Journey of India Programme of Doordarshan and video spots are being run on various regional channels of Doordarshan in the North-Eastern region for educating consumers about features of Consumer Protection Act 2019, BIS standards, MRP, expiry date, National Consumer Helpline (NCH) etc.

7.3 The Committee were also informed by the Department that an impact assessment study of all schemes of the Department including Consumer awareness scheme, carried out by National Productivity Council (NPC) included assessment of publicity campaign in North East, submitted by NPC during 2021, advised exploring use of social media in creating awareness in rural and urban areas. In this regard, the Department informed having made extensive use of social media platforms to generate consumer awareness at zero dissemination cost.

(ii) RATE OF CASE DISPOSAL OF CASES IN CONSUMER COMMISSIONS

7.4 On a query regarding the number of cases filed, disposed and pending in each Consumer Commission (CC) in the North East, the Department of Consumer Affairs furnished the following information which is also updated in November, 2023:

“The status of cases filed, disposed and pending in the North-Eastern state since inception (till 03.01.2023) is as follows:

State Commissions

S.No	Name of State	No. of cases filed	No. of cases disposed	No. of pending cases
1	Arunachal Pradesh	115	114	1
2	Assam	838	470	368
3	Manipur	249	214	35
4	Meghalaya	242	230	12
5	Mizoram	79	62	17
6	Nagaland	44	37	7
7	Sikkim	48	44	4
8	Tripura	397	369	28

District Commissions

S.No	Name of State	No. of District Commissions within the state	No. of cases filed	No. of cases disposed	No. of pending cases
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1	Arunachal Pradesh	9	507	474	33
2	Assam	22	4854	3099	1755
3	Manipur	3	696	623	73
4	Meghalaya	6	1279	1203	76
5	Mizoram	7	580	545	35
6	Nagaland	8	120	70	50
7	Sikkim	4	204	173	31
8	Tripura	4	1723	1530	193

....”

7.5 The Committee note that 2012 cases and 9963 cases are filed in the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (SCs) and the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (DCs) respectively in the NE States. They are of the opinion that even if the projects of Strengthening of Consumer Commissions, CONFONET, Legal Metrology Infrastructure, Price Monitoring, etc. are in place, unless sufficient level of awareness exists, the consumers in the Northeast will not get full benefit from the Schemes of the Central Government. It may be noted that as per information furnished by the Department, a total of 397 cases were filed, 369 disposed and 28 are pending in State Commissions of the Northeast. Similarly, out of the total of 1723 cases filed, 1530 cases were disposed and 193 are pending in District Commissions of the Northeast. The Committee, therefore, recommend that while making use of social media in creating awareness in rural and urban areas, the Government should ensure that impact of awareness campaigns is reflected in the data on cases in the Consumer Commissions. They also desire that the consumer rights awareness messages are accompanied with a call to action for exercising one’s responsibility in passing on awareness about the right as a consumer.

(Recommendation No. 13)

**New Delhi;
18 December, 2023
27 Agrahayana, 1945 (Saka)**

**LOCKET CHATTERJEE,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**

MINUTES OF THE TENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD,
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (2021-2022) HELD ON
TUESDAY, 28 JUNE, 2022.

The Committee sat from 1100 hrs. to 1230 hrs. in Committee Room '2', First Floor,
Block-A, Parliament House Annexe Extension, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay - Chairperson

Members

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Farooq Abdullah
3. Shri Karadi Sanganna Amarappa
4. Shri Khagen Murmu
5. Shri Mitesh Rameshbhai (Bakabhai) Patel
6. Shri Subrat Pathak
7. Smt. Himadri Singh
8. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan

RAJYA SABHA

9. Shri Satish Chandra Dubey
10. Dr. Fauzia Khan
11. Shri Rajmani Patel
12. Shri Ramji
13. Shri G.K. Vasani

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Vatsala Joshi - Director
2. Shri Ram Lal Yadav - Additional Director

LIST OF WITNESSES

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Rohit Kumar Singh	Secretary (CA)
2.	Shri Pramod Kumar Tiwari	DG(BIS&NTH)
3.	Ms. Nidhi Khare	Additional Secretary (CA)
4.	Shri G. Srinivas	AS&FA
5.	Shri Vineet Mathur	Joint Secretary
6.	Shri Anupam Mishra	Joint Secretary
7.	Dr. Kamkhenthang Guite	Economic Advisor
8.	Shri Shashi Bhushan	Advisor (Cost)
9.	Shri Dhruv Kumar Singh	Chief Controller of Accounts
10.	Shri Hanumantha Rao	Registrar, NCDRC
11.	Shri Alok Kumar Verma	Director (Publicity)
12.	Shri B.N. Dixit	Director (LM)

13.	Shri Surendra Singh	Director (P&C)
14.	Shri N. Natarajan	Director (NIC)
15.	Shri Subhash Chandra Meena	Director (CPU & PMD)
16.	Dr. Rajeshwar	Director (IILM)

2. At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee convened to have oral evidence on the subject 'Initiatives in the Northeast in the field of Consumer Rights Protection'.

[The Witnesses were then called in]

3. The Chairperson welcomed the Representatives of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs) to the sitting of the Committee and apprised them about the Direction 55(i) of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha regarding confidentiality of the Proceedings. After introduction by the witnesses to the Committee, the Additional Secretary (CA) briefed through a power-point presentation on various aspects of the subject. The Committee discussed various issues including pecuniary jurisdiction of Consumer Commissions, allocation and utilization of funds for strengthening Consumer Commissions, misleading advertisements, filling up of vacancies in State Consumer Commissions, cases in Consumer Helplines, online case monitoring system of consumer cases, price reporting centres, etc. Hon'ble Chairperson and Members of the Committee sought clarifications on various matters contained in the subject.

4. The queries raised by the Chairperson and Members on various issues during the course of discussion were responded to by the witnesses. The Hon'ble Chairperson then thanked the Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs and other witnesses for their free and frank discussion and directed the Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs to furnish information to the Committee on issues that remained unanswered/ partially answered.

[Witnesses withdrew]

5. Thereafter, the Committee decided to undertake a Study Visit to Jaipur and Amritsar during the last week of August, 2022 in connection with examination of the Subjects selected by them.

A Verbatim Report of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

MINUTES OF THE FIFTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (2022-2023) HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 21 DECEMBER , 2022.

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1630 hrs. in Main Committee Room, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Locket Chatterjee - Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Farooq Abdullah
3. Shri Anil Firojiya
4. Shri Karadi Sanganna Amarappa
5. Shri Khagen Murmu
6. Shri Mitesh Rameshbhai (Bakabhai) Patel
7. Shri Subrat Pathak
8. Shri Ganesan Selvam
9. Dr. Amar Singh
10. Smt. Himadri Singh
11. Smt. Kavita Singh
12. Shri Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka
13. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan
14. Shri Ve. Vaithilingam

RAJYA SABHA

15. Shri Baburam Nishad
16. Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss
17. Dr. Ashok Bajpai

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Srinivasulu Gunda - Joint Secretary
2. Dr. Vatsala Joshi - Director

LIST OF WITNESSES

Sl No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Rohit Kumar Singh	Secretary (CA)
2.	Shri Pramod Kumar Tiwari	DG(BIS)
3.	Shri Vineet Mathur	Joint Secretary
4.	Dr. Kamkhenthang Guite	Economic Advisor
5.	Shri Anupam Mishra	Joint Secretary
6.	Shri Shashi Bhushan	Advisor (Cost)
7.	Shri Alok Kumar Srivastava	DG(NTH)
8.	Shri Subhash Chandra Meena	Director (PMD)
9.	Shri K.C. Singha	Director (IFD)
10.	Shri Natarajan	Director (NIC)

2. At the outset, Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for briefing by the representatives of the Department of Consumer Affairs on the subject 'Initiatives in the North East in the field of Consumer Rights Protection'.

[The witnesses were then called in.]

3. The Chairperson then welcomed the representatives of Department of Consumer Affairs to the sitting and informed them about Direction 55 (1) of the 'Directions by the Speaker' regarding confidentiality of the proceedings. Thereafter before briefing, the representatives of the Ministry introduced themselves to the Committee. Then with the permission of the Chair, the representatives of the Department of Consumer Affairs briefed the Committee on various aspects of the subject, 'Initiatives in the North East in the field of Consumer Rights Protection' with the help of Power Point Presentation. The main issues covered, *inter-alia*, include Consumer Protection Framework, Development & Enforcement of Standards, Price Monitoring & Price Stabilisation, Legal Metrology & Time Dissemination Project, Consumer Helpline, Success Stories in e-Commerce Platforms, Workshops held on Consumer Protection, etc. The queries raised by Chairperson and Members on various issues during the course of briefing were responded to by the witnesses.

4. The Hon'ble Chairperson then thanked the Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs and other witnesses for briefing the Committee.

[The *Witnesses* then *withdrew*.]

A Verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (2023-24) HELD ON MONDAY, 18 DECEMBER, 2023

The Committee sat from 1030 hrs. to 1100 hrs. in Committee Room No. '1', Block-A, Extension to Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Locket Chatterjee - Chairperson

Members

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Farooq Abdullah
3. Ms. Debasree Chaudhuri
4. Shri Khagen Murmu
5. Shri Mitesh Rameshbhai Patel
6. Shri Ganesan Selvam
7. Smt. Himadri Singh
8. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan

Rajya Sabha

9. Dr. Ashok Bajpai
10. Shri Satish Chandra Dubey
11. Shri Baburam Nishad
12. Shri Sakaldeep Rajbhar

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Joint Secretary
2. Dr. Vatsala Joshi - Director
3. Shri Dong Lianthang Tonsing - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration and adoption of the following Draft Reports:

(i) Draft Report on the subject, 'Initiatives in the North East in the Field of Consumer Rights Protection' pertaining to the Department of Consumer Affairs;

(ii) XXXX XXXX

3. Thereafter the Committee took up for consideration the Draft Reports

4. After some deliberations, the Committee adopted both the Draft Reports without any amendments/modifications.

5. The Committee then authorized Hon'ble Chairperson to finalize the report and present/lay the same in both Houses of Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

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XXXX Not related to this report