

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS,
FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (2024-2025)**

1

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

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

{Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Thirty Seventh Report of the Committee (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) 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)}

FIRST REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2024/ Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

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(DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS)**

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*Presented to Lok Sabha on 02.12.2024
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 02.12.2024*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2024/ Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

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Composition of the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (2024-25)

Smt. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi - Chairperson

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Anto Antony
3. Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay
4. Shri Jaswantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor
5. Smt. Malvika Devi
6. Shri Manish Jaiswal
7. Shri Saumitra Khan
8. Shri Manoj Kumar
9. Shri Sunil Kumar
10. Shri Bharat Singh Kushwah
11. Shri Ajendra Singh Lodhi
12. Shri Neeraj Maurya
13. Shri Bastipati Nagaraju
14. Shri Haribhai Patel
15. Shri Ashok Kumar Rawat
16. Shri Buntly Vivek Sahu
17. Shri Rao Rajendra Singh
18. Shri Ujjwal Raman Singh
19. Shri Bajrang Manohar Sonwane
20. Dr. Indra Hang Subba
21. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan

RAJYA SABHA

22. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
23. Shri Prakash Chik Baraik
24. Shri Rambhai Harjibhai Mokariya
25. Shri Baburam Nishad
26. Smt. Ranjeet Ranjan
27. Shri Arun Singh
28. Vacant
29. Vacant
30. Vacant
31. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Joint Secretary
2. Dr. Vatsala Joshi - Director
3. Dr. Mohit Rajan - Deputy Secretary
4. Shri Abdul Khan - Assistant Committee Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (2024-2025) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this First Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Thirty Seventh Report of the Committee (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) 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 Thirty Seventh Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.12.2023. The Government has furnished its replies indicating Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the Report on 15.04.2024

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 28.11.2024.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report is given in **Appendix II**.

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

NEW DELHI;
28 November, 2024
07 Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

Kanimozhi Karunanidhi
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

REPORT

CHAPTER - I

This Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Thirty Seventh Report of the Committee (2023-2024), (17th Lok Sabha) on the subject, 'Initiatives in the North East in the Field of Consumer Rights Protection' pertaining to the Department of Consumer Affairs.

1.2 The Thirty Seventh Report was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid in the Rajya Sabha on 19.12.2023. It contained 13 Observations/ Recommendations.

1.3 Action taken replies in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have been received and categorized as follows:-

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Para Nos.: 1.9, 2.2, 2.23, 2.24, 2.25, 3.5, 3.13, 4.7, 4.8, 5.4, 5.9, 6.5, 7.5

Total: 13

Chapter-II

- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:

Para Nos.: NIL

Total: 00

Chapter-III

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration:

Para No.: NIL

Total:00

Chapter-IV

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:

Para No. : NIL

Total: 00

Chapter-V

1.4 The Committee trust that utmost importance will be given to the implementation of the Observations/Recommendations accepted by the Government. The Committee desire that final action taken notes to the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter I of this Report should be furnished to them not later than three months of the presentation of this Report.

1.5 The Committee will now deal with action-taken by the Government on some of their Recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

Recommendation No. 5 (Para No.2.25)

1.6 The Committee had recommended as under:

“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.”

1.7 In its action-taken reply, the Ministry has stated as under:

“To make the stakeholders familiar with the features of the new platform, the Department has started a capacity building program for the application users. In this regard, a training workshop was held on 13th Feb 2024 at New Delhi. “

1.8 The Committee, while recognizing the Department's efforts in promoting the e-Daakhil portal by various online and offline modes, recommended for more intensified awareness programmes and regional workshops for better penetration. In their action taken reply, the Department has informed that they had started a capacity building programme for application users and a training workshop was held on 13 February,

2024 at New Delhi. While reiterating their earlier recommendation, the Committee are not satisfied with just one workshop organized for the awareness of stakeholders and desire that more targeted efforts in all regions, particularly in rural and less developed areas, where awareness is often lower should be intensified to make it more impactful in all the parts of the country. The Committee may also be apprised of the same accordingly.

Recommendation No. 6 (Para No. 3.5)

1.9 The Committee had recommended as under:

“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.”

1.10 In its action-taken, reply the Ministry has stated as under:

“The recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted.”

1.11 While observing the fact that several North-Eastern States were not complying with the provisions of Consumer Protection Act, 2019, particularly the establishment of District Consumer Protection Councils (DCPCs) in every district and regular meetings of State Consumer Protection Councils (SCPCs) at least twice a year. The Committee had desired that the Central Government should see the mandates of Section 6(3) and 8 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is fulfilled in each North-Eastern State.

In their action-taken reply, the Department has only stated that they have noted the observations and recommendations of the Committee. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their recommendation and urge the Central Government to ensure the full implementation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 in all North-Eastern States

particularly the basis mandates of regular meetings of SCPCs and the establishment of DCPCs to safeguard consumer rights of this region.

CHAPTER – II

OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation Serial No. 1 (Para No. 1.9)

The Committee note that under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, a three-tier quasi-judicial 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.

Reply of the Government

2.2 The Government of India continues to provide financial assistance under the Scheme of Strengthening the Infrastructure of Consumer Commissions. Special attention is being given to the North Eastern States to ensure that the infrastructure is robust and capable of delivering speedy, simple, and inexpensive resolution of consumer disputes which is evident from the fact that during last 3 years, a total of ₹ 999.40 lakh have been released under the Scheme of Strengthening of Consumer Commissions, out of which ₹ 382.08 lakh have been released for States in North Eastern region, which implies that around 38% of the total funds released under the SCC scheme during the last 3 years have been released to the North-Eastern states.

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) is committed to ensure speedy disposal of consumer cases in the country. In recent years, the DoCA has taken a number of initiatives to expedite the resolution of consumer disputes, including organizing regional workshops, conferences, and roundtable discussions with stakeholders, disposal by Lok Adalats etc. One such regional workshop was held in Guwahati on 2nd December, 2022 which was intended specifically towards deliberating key issues revolving around consumer protection in the north-eastern states. The workshop was attended by the Presidents and Members of the State Commissions and District Commissions situated within the North-eastern states along with the Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of the Consumer Affairs departments in these states. During the course of workshop, various panel discussions on issues such as reducing the pendency in Consumer Commissions, strengthening the infrastructure of Consumer Commissions, using mediation for speedier resolution of consumer cases etc. were held and deliberated upon. These efforts have resulted in a significant increase in the number of cases disposed of by Consumer Commissions across the country including the North eastern region.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation Serial No. 2 (Para no 2.2)

2.3 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.

Reply of the Government

2.4 As per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the responsibility of establishing consumer commissions at the District and State level as well as filling up posts of Presidents and Members in these consumer commissions lie with the respective States/UTs.

However, **the Central Government is committed to provide necessary support and assistance to the North Eastern States for strengthening their Consumer Commissions.** 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 so that minimum level of facilities to settle consumer disputes redressal are made available at each Consumer Commission.

As per the latest information received from North Eastern States, the present status of Consumer Commissions in the North Eastern region is as under:

S. No.	States/UTs	Whether State Commission		District Commission		
		Functional	Non-Functional	Number of District Commissions	Functional	Non-functional
	Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	25	18	7
	Assam	1	0	23	23	0
	Manipur	1	0	3	3	0
	Meghalaya	1	0	7	7	0
	Mizoram	1	0	11	11	0
	Nagaland	1	0	16	11	5

Sikkim	1	0	6	6	0
Tripura	1	0	4	4	0
Total	8	0	95	83	12

2.5 The status of proposals received from the North-Eastern States in the last two years under the “Strengthening Consumer Commissions (SCC)” scheme is as follows:

1. Assam: The Department has released total funds amounting to ₹ 22.08 lakh to the state of Assam in the F.Y 2022-23.
2. Arunachal Pradesh: An amount of ₹ 1.50 crore was released to Government of Arunachal Pradesh for non-building assistance for the State Commission and 16 District Commissions located in the state.
3. Sikkim: The Department released funds amounting to ₹ 65 lakh to the state of Sikkim for non-building assistance for the State Commission and 4 District Commissions located within the state of Sikkim.
4. Nagaland: Government of Nagaland is yet to furnish the clarifications sought by this department in reference to the proposal submitted by them in the F.Y 2022-23. Besides, a total of ₹ 979.25 lakh have been released to the Govt. of Nagaland for upgrading the infrastructure of Consumer Commissions since inception by the Department of Consumer Affairs. However, there is still pending UCs of ₹ 80 lakh on part of Nagaland in respect of funds released to them in the year 2013-14.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)

OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No. 3 (Para No. 2.23)

2.6 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.

Reply of the Government

2.7 The recommendation of the committee has been duly noted. It is submitted that all the Districts of North Eastern States have been equipped with computer hardware. Besides CONFONET, the Department also administers a scheme called Strengthening of Consumer Commissions (SCC) through which hardware accessories are provided to the consumer commissions to strengthen the technical infrastructure. The Department has also launched the revamped portal of CONFONET i.e. "e-jagriti.gov.in" on 24th Dec 2023. This platform is a new integrated platform for CONFONET software.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No. 4 (Para No. 2.24)

2.8 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.

Reply of the Government

2.9 The recommendation of the committee has been duly noted. The Division provides the hardware to the consumer commissions across the country and the same is replaced on need basis. It is further submitted that all the Districts of North Eastern States are fully equipped with computer hardware. To make the stakeholders familiar with the features of the new platform (e-Jagriti), the Department has started a capacity building program for the application users. In this regard, a training workshop was held on 13th Feb 2024 at New Delhi.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

(Recommendation No. 5) Para No. 2.25

2.10 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.

Reply of the Government

2.11 To make the stakeholders familiar with the features of the new platform, the Department has started a capacity building program for the application users. In this regard, a training workshop was held on 13th Feb 2024 at New Delhi.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No.1.8 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 6 (Para No. 3.5)

2.12 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.

Reply of the Government

2.13 The recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No.1.11 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 7 (Para No. 3.13)

2.14 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 uptoRs. 50 Lakh so that they may not burden themselves with disputes of higher value.

Reply of the Government

2.15 As per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, the responsibility of establishing consumer commissions at the District and State level lie 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 infrastructure so that they

function effectively. The Central Government doesn't have any say in deciding the location of the consumer commission as the land is provided by the concerned State Government.

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 so that minimum level of facilities to settle consumer disputes redressal are made available at each Consumer Commission.

As regards pecuniary jurisdiction of Consumer Commissions is concerned, the same has been revised vide notification dated 30.12.2021 and is presently as under:

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

Consumer cases are admitted in the Consumer Commissions based on both the pecuniary and the territorial jurisdiction.

Further, the Government has established the E-Daakhil Portal to streamline the online submission of consumer complaints. This portal offers a convenient, rapid, and cost-effective platform, allowing consumers to easily engage with the appropriate consumer forum without the necessity of traveling or being physically present to register their grievances.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No.8 (Para No. 4.7)

2.16 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.

Reply of the Government

2.17 Department will give topmost priority for promoting the policy of Act for eventual integration of the region with the rest of the country and to efficient execution of the schemes under Legal Metrology for Quantity Assurance. All the necessary efforts will be made for setting up of camp offices/ RRSLs at suitable locations in the North Eastern Region in association with Controllers of Legal Metrology of NE States.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)

OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No. 9 (Para 4.8)

2.18 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.

Reply of the Government

2.19 During 2012-13 to 2023-24 an amount of Rs. 27.19 crore was released to NE States, of which Rs. 20.18 crore has been utilised and an amount of Rs. 7.01 crore is pending.

However, all the necessary efforts will be made to 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. Department will give topmost priority to efficient execution of the schemes under Legal Metrology. It will be ensured that funds allocated will be judiciously utilized in time without compromising on quality. The Department will closely monitor the progress of implementation and will make every sincere effort to get the funds utilised. The meetings with various stake holders will be held regularly to monitor the progress of the Scheme.

The Department will closely monitor the progress implementation and will make every sincere effort to get the funds utilised.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)

OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No. 10 (Para No. 5.4)

2.20 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.

Reply of the Government

2.21 At present there are 550 price reporting centres across 34 states/UTs including 86 centres in North Eastern States. All the price reporting centres in North-eastern States are functional and are reporting daily prices, except the centres in the State of Manipur. The price reporting centres in Manipur have not been reporting daily prices since May 2023 due to the prevailing law and order situation in the State.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No. 11 (Para No. 5.9)

2.22 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.

Reply of the Government

2.23 Prices of agri-horticultural commodities are volatile and 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, geopolitical tensions etc. Sometimes slight disruptions in supply chain or damage due to heavy rains leads to spike in prices of agri-horticultural commodities. Conversely, bulk arrival and logistics problems have the potential of creating a situation of glut in the market and resultant dip in retail prices.

Government takes various measures from time to time to augment domestic availability and stabilize the prices of essential food commodities. These steps, inter-alia, include releases from the buffer to cool down prices, imposition of stock limits, monitoring of stocks declared by entities to prevent hoarding as also requisite changes in trade policy instruments like rationalization of import duty, changes in import quota, restrictions on exports of the commodity etc.

State Governments, including NE States, have been requested to implement State-level Price Stabilisation Fund (SLPSF) for intervention to control price volatility by availing funds for the PSF scheme. Funds from the PSF schemes are provided to States for setting up State-level PSF Corpus on a 50:50 sharing between Centre and State (the sharing pattern is 75:25 for NE States). Till date, 2 State, viz., Assam and Nagaland have been sanctioned State-level PSF corpus fund of Rs. 200 crore and Rs. 100 crore respectively.

Status of Bharat Chana Dal

To make dals available to consumers at affordable prices, Bharat Dal has been launched in July, 2023 by converting Chana stock in the PSF into Chana dal for retail disposal. The Bharat Chana Dal is made available to the consumers at subsidized rates of Rs.60 per kg for 1 kg pack and Rs.55 per kg for 30 kg pack. Over 5.50 LMT of Bharat Chana Dal has been sold to retail consumers till date.

Status of Bharat Chana Dal - North East States

Bharat Chana Dal is distributed in the North Eastern States by NCCF and NAFED as per demand of the consumers and States Governments.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)

OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No. 12 (Para No. 6.5)

2.24 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 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 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.

Reply of the Government

2.25 The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted. As per the guidelines and terms & condition of Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF), all the concerned states have to furnish the Utilization Certificate by the end of financial year.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)

OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

Recommendation No. 13 (Para No. 7.5)

2.26 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.

Reply of the Government

2.27 Besides providing Grants in aid to North-Eastern States for creating consumer awareness through various activities, the Department has also participated in the Hornbill festival. Further, the Department has also extensively used social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Koo and Public for generating awareness. Regular posts in the form of infographics, gifs and videos have been uploaded to educate and empower consumers.

[Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs)
OM NO- N-19/2/2024-P&C dated 15.04.2024]

CHAPTER – III

**RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO
PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES**

- NIL -

CHAPTER – IV

**RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE
GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE**

- NIL -

CHAPTER - V

**RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE FINAL REPLIES
OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED**

- NIL -

**NEW DELHI;
28 NOVEMBER, 2024
07 AGRAHAYANA, 1946 (Saka)**

**(KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI)
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Consumer
Affairs and Public Distribution**

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (2024-2025) HELD ON THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2024

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room No. 'D', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi - Chairperson

Members

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. Malvika Devi
3. Shri Manish Jaiswal
4. Shri Manoj Kumar
5. Shri Sunil Kumar
6. Shri Ajendra Singh Lodhi
7. Shri Haribhai Patel
8. Shri Buntly Vivek Sahu
9. Shri Rao Rajendra Singh
10. Shri Ujjwal Raman Singh
11. Shri Bajrang Manohar Sonwane
12. Dr. Indra Hang Subba
13. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan

Rajya Sabha

14. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
15. Shri Prakash Chik Baraik
16. Shri Baburam Nishad
17. Smt. Ranjeet Ranjan
18. Shri Arun Singh

SECRETARIAT

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai | - Joint Secretary |
| 2. Dr. Vatsala Joshi | - Director |
| 3. Dr. Mohit Rajan | - 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 of the Committee:

- (i) First Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Thirty Seventh Report of the Committee (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Initiatives in the North- East in the field of Consumer Rights Protection' of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs);
- (ii) XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX
- (iii) XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX
- (iv) XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

3. Thereafter, the Committee took up for consideration the above mentioned Draft Reports of the Committee.

4. After deliberations, the Committee adopted the above mentioned Draft Reports without any amendments/modifications.

5. The Committee then authorized Hon'ble Chairperson to finalize and present the aforesaid Reports.

The Committee then adjourned.

XXXX Matter does not pertain to report

APPENDIX II

(Vide Para No. 4 of Introduction of the Report)

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY SEVENTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (2023-2024)

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

- (i) Total number of Recommendations: 13
- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government :
Para Nos.:- 1.9, 2.2, 2.23, 2.24, 2.25, 3.5, 3.13, 4.7, 4.8, 5.4, 5.9, 6.5, 7.5
(Chapter – II, Total 13)
Percentage : 100%
- (iii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to
pursue in view of the replies received from the Government:
Para Nos. Nil
(Chapter – III, Total - NIL)
Percentage : 0%
- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the
Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require
reiteration:
Para Nos. : Nil
(Chapter – IV, Total NIL)
Percentage : 0%
- (v) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the interim replies of the
Government have been received.
Para Nos.:- NIL
(Chapter – V, Total NIL)
Percentage : 0%