

Consumer Affairs Department functions through three wings viz. the Directorate of Consumer Affairs & Fair Business Practices, the Directorate of Legal Metrology and the State Commission & District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum.

Achievement for current financial year (2011-12)

1) Directorate of Consumer Affairs & Fair Business Practices

1. Organised awareness programmes through camps, seminars-cum-group discussion, workshops, Tableau (Mobile display van), street dramas, magic shows, talking doll shows and regular awareness programmes with Self Help Groups, Clubs & Associations. Total no. of programmes held in the year 2011-12 (upto January'12) is 9365.
2. Like previous years the essay writing, poster illustration, slogan writing and sit & draw competition among the school students for consumer awareness on the occasion of National Consumer Day were organized throughout West Bengal.
3. Organised training programmes on consumer education for Departmental staff and members of NGOs & VCOs by three Divisional offices of this Directorate.
4. "Kreta Surksha Mela" was organised at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Kolkata on & from 16.09.11 to 18.09.11. Various topics related with Consumer Protection Act and other consumer friendly acts and rules have been discussed by the resource persons and cultural programmes were also held.
5. Participated in different fairs throughout West Bengal at the ensuing winter season. Poush Mela in Birbhum, Rash Mela in Coochbehar, Jalpesh Mela in Jalpaiguri, Gangasagar Mela and Sundarban Yuba Utsab in South 24 Pgs. were held and participated by our R.Os.
6. Leaflets and booklets were published in Bengali, Hindi, English and Urdu languages containing basic information on consumer awareness.
7. Two editions of "Upabhokta Samachar", quarterly newsletter of Consumer Affairs Department, were published containing different topics in Bengali, English & Urdu languages.

8. Organised Special awareness programmes during important festivals like Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Jagadhatri Puja, Saraswati Puja & Eid with great enthusiasm throughout West Bengal . Installation of stalls at Puja Mondaps , displaying of banners, mobile van campaigning, leaflet distribution, sit & draw, quiz, poster & slogan competitions were also organised throughout September'11. This special drive created a lot of interest in the minds of pandel hoppers during puja days.
9. Special programme has been taken up to install hoarding at blocks , sub divisions and district headquarters, containing basic information to aware the consumers.
10. In Kolkata, 12 no. of hoardings have been installed in front of 12 important market places.
11. Live phone in programmes are being broadcasted through F.M. Gyanvani Radio on consumer protection and consumer rights.
12. Live phone in programmes are being telecasted through Doordarshan Kendra (D.D. Bangla) Kolkata on consumer awareness titled "Kena Katar Sat Satero"- every Friday from 8.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. The Regional Offices also conducted same type of programmes through the local cable channels.
13. Steps have been taken to install "Touch Screen Kiosks" at different important malls & markets with improved software.
14. Sponsored the members of NGOs/ VCOs for study in Certificate on Consumer Protection course at IGNOU every year. 50 such members were sponsored during the year 2011-12.
15. National Consumer Day was observed with great enthusiasm on 24th December, 2011 at Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata. Apart from discussion on consumer awareness, different cultural programmes were held. A colourful rally was organised on that particular day. Hon'ble M.I.C., Consumer Affairs Department inaugurated the Consumer Help Line No.1800 345 2808 on that day. This number is toll free.
16. Resolved consumer complaints through mediation before the complainant would lodge their complaint at the Consumer Forum. In all the Regional offices of West Bengal and Headquarters of this Directorate. 1887 no. of complaints were received within January, 2012 & 971 no. of complaints were redressed in favour of the consumer.

17. Steps have been taken in joint collaboration with GIZ & FICCI to minimize the number of long pending cases lying at the district Fora, State Commission etc. A separate area measuring 108 sq. ft. has already been earmarked at Kolkata Unit I for that purpose. The same project would be implemented at the district in near future.
18. 15,250 number of counseling to help the aggrieved consumers has been done upto January'12.
19. Suo motu filing of cases at 'Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies' u/s 12(1)(d) of C.P. Act, 1986. A complaint has been lodged against the 'Manikjor scheme' of BSNL on 09.11.2011 vide no. CC/102/11 at State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission. The case filed on 14.11.2011 for their abrupt withdrawal of the scheme (Free talking with the concerned Landline).
20. Special Task Forces were created in Kolkata and in the districts with the Legal Metrology Directorate. Consumer Welfare Officers actively participated to curb the unfair trade practices.
21. An awareness programme for the protection of investors from unscrupulous financial organization, specially NBFC, was held on 13th December'11 at RBI Auditorium, Kolkata in joint collaboration with RBI & CA Department. SEBI & Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Govt. of India were also associated with that programme. In the 1st step of the programme 150 no. of C.W.Os, D.A.Ds and A.Ds were trained as master trainer. Such type of awareness programmes will be also organized by these master trainers in all Gram Panchayats, Blocks and all wards of the Municipalities to make the common people aware.
22. Hon'ble MIC of the Department held meeting with all Medical Insurance Companies operating in the state along with their TPAs. Representatives of IMA, Insurance Agents' Association were also present in that meeting. Protection of the interest of the consumer patients & to minimize the harassment were discussed and steps to be taken to give redressal to them as far as practicable.
23. A special drive has been taken for setting up 1,000 'Consumer Clubs' in schools and colleges throughout the State. Already 616 institutions expressed their interest.

2. Fora Branch of Consumer Affairs Department

This wings, safeguards the interest of the consumer and assists in the redressal of consumer's grievances as per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, One State Commission with an additional bench at Kolkata and 21 District Fora covering all the districts including two extra fora - one at Kolkata and the other at Siliguri are currently functioning. One Circuit Bench of Jalpaiguri Forum at Alipurduar has also been set up.

In all Fora including the State Commission for the period from January, 2011 to December, 2011 - **3,926** cases have been disposed of. The number of cases filed during this period is **4,253**.

3. Legal Metrology Directorate

The West Bengal Legal Metrology Organisation was set up on 1959 under the administrative control of the Commerce & Industries Department, Government of West Bengal and was brought under the Consumer Affairs Department in June, 2002. It was upgraded to a full fledged directorate under the name and style "Directorate of Legal Metrology" with effect from 21.01.2003. This Directorate is committed to safeguard the interests of consumers, caused by fraudulent use of weights and measures and suppression of valuable information or misrepresentation on packages of products by unscrupulous manufactures, packers and traders, through implementation of different Acts and Rules.

The Directorate works in close collaboration with the Government of India in maintaining standards.

The Directorate continued its efforts to i) increase collection of non tax revenue, ii) cover as many markets and traders as possible for verification of weights and measures used by them , iii) check malpractices and fraud committed by way of short supply than the declared weights and charging beyond the MRP , iv) educate manufacturing and trading communities on various provisions of Acts and Rules .

Various consumer awareness programmes were also organized during the period in question.

A task force has been constituted and regular enforcement drive is being conducted by the Legal Metrology directorate in different markets. Legal action has been taken against unscrupulous traders for fraudulent use of weights and measures .

For the period from April to December 2011 the Legal Metrology Directorate has realized Rs.9,00,19,512/- as verification fees etc. and no. of traders covered was 267481 up to December , 2011 . Besides Rs.66,35,800/- have been realized as compounding fees. 1748 seizures were also made during the period from April to December , 2011.

Raid programmes are being conducted by Legal Metrology Directorate in collaboration with Bureau of Indian Standards, Government of India to check and verify the standards of weights and measures as well as quality of the product in different shops / establishments & markets .