



## World Consumer Rights Day 2025

### *Key Initiatives and Developments in Consumer Protection*

Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

March 14, 2025

#### Introduction

**World Consumer Rights Day**, observed annually on **March 15**, serves as an essential reminder of the need to **uphold consumer rights and protection**. The day is an opportunity to promote the **basic rights** of all consumers and encourage those rights to be **respected** and **protected**. World Consumer Rights Day was first observed in **1983**. This date was chosen to commemorate **President John F. Kennedy's** address to the US Congress on March 15, 1962, where he became the **first world leader** to **formally recognize consumer rights**.

The theme for **World Consumer Rights Day 2025** is, 'A Just Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles.' This theme reflects the urgent need to make sustainable and healthy lifestyle choices available, accessible, and affordable for all consumers – while ensuring that these transitions uphold people's basic rights and needs. This year's campaign highlights the pathways needed to achieve sustainable lifestyles and call for stronger consumer protection and empowerment worldwide.

**WHY 2025 IS A LANDMARK YEAR**

This year's World Consumer Rights Day coincides with pivotal global events:

At the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) in March 2024, a historic resolution on Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles was passed. UNEA-7 in December 2025 will evaluate progress and strengthen further commitments.	Sustainable living will be a key focus at COP30 in Brazil in November 2025, building on the momentum from COP29, where Consumers International called for sustainable lifestyles to be included in national climate commitments.	With just five years remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, urgent action is needed to bring many off-track goals back on course.
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The **Department of Consumer Affairs**, Government of India, has introduced several new initiatives and policies to empower consumers, strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms, and ensure a transparent and fair marketplace. In 2024, major developments included improvements in **e-commerce regulations**, **digital consumer protection**, **product safety standards**, and **sustainable consumption initiatives**.










## Consumer Protection Act, 2019

With a view to **modernize the framework governing** the consumer protection in the new era of globalization, technologies, e-commerce markets etc., the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** was enacted. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides for a **three tier quasi-judicial machinery** at District, State and Central levels commonly known as “**Consumer Commissions**” for protection of the rights of consumers and to provide simple and speedy redressal of consumer disputes including those related with unfair trade practices. The Consumer Commissions are empowered to give relief of a specific nature and award, wherever appropriate, compensation to consumers.

### More Power to the Consumer!

Consumer Protection Act, 2019 Comes into Force



 <p>Consumer Protection Act, 2019 replaced the consumer protection Act, 1986 to provide timely administration &amp; settlement of consumer's dispute</p>	 <p>Establishment of Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect &amp; enforce the rights of consumers</p>
 <p>The new Act empower &amp; protect the rights of consumers through various notified rules &amp; provisions related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Consumer Protection Councils</li><li>✓ Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions</li><li>✓ Mediation</li><li>✓ Product Liability</li><li>✓ Rules on e-commerce and direct selling</li><li>✓ Penalty for adulterant &amp; spurious goods</li></ul>	 <p>CCPA empowered to perform the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Conduct investigations into violations of consumer rights &amp; institute complaints/prosecution</li><li>✓ Order recall of unsafe goods and services</li><li>✓ Order discontinuance of unfair trade practices &amp; misleading advertisements</li><li>✓ Impose penalties on manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading advertisements</li></ul>
 <p>Product liability provision to deter manufacturers &amp; service providers for delivering defective products or deficient services</p>	 <p>Provision of Rules for prevention of unfair trade practice by e-commerce platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Every e-commerce entity to provide information relating to return, refund, grievance redressal mechanism, etc. including country of origin</li><li>✓ Acknowledge the receipt of any consumer complaint within 48 hours</li><li>✓ Redress the complaint within one month from the date of receipt</li></ul>
 <p>Alternate dispute resolution mechanism of Mediation for early settlement of cases</p>	 <p>Punishment of manufacturer or sale of adulterant/spurious goods. Suspension of license up to 2 years in case of first conviction &amp; cancellation of license for subsequent conviction</p>
 <p>Simplified dispute resolution process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ State &amp; District Commissions can now review their own orders</li><li>✓ Empowerment of Consumer commissions to enforce their orders</li><li>✓ Ease of approaching consumer commissions through electronic filing of complaints &amp; Videoconferencing for hearing</li><li>✓ Deemed admissibility after 21 days of filing; Appeals only on question of law after second stage</li></ul>	

Further, in terms of **Section 38 (7)** of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, every complaint shall be disposed of as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to decide the complaint within a period of **three months** from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities and **within five months** if it requires analysis or testing of commodities.

## Consumer Welfare Fund

The overall objective of the Consumer Welfare Fund is to provide **financial assistance** to promote and protect the welfare of consumers and strengthen the consumer movement in the country. Under the Rules, funds are given to the states/UTs as seed money as one time grant on **75:25 basis** (90:10 in the case of Special Category states/UTs) to create a **Consumer Welfare (Corpus) Fund**. The states/UTs are required to carry out activities to provide coverage to projects for consumer welfare of local relevance out of the interests generated in the Corpus Fund every year.

During the **FY 2024-25**, **₹32.68 crore** have been released to various states for the establishment/enhancement of their respective State Consumer Welfare (Corpus) Fund as Central Govt. share. As such, out of 28 States

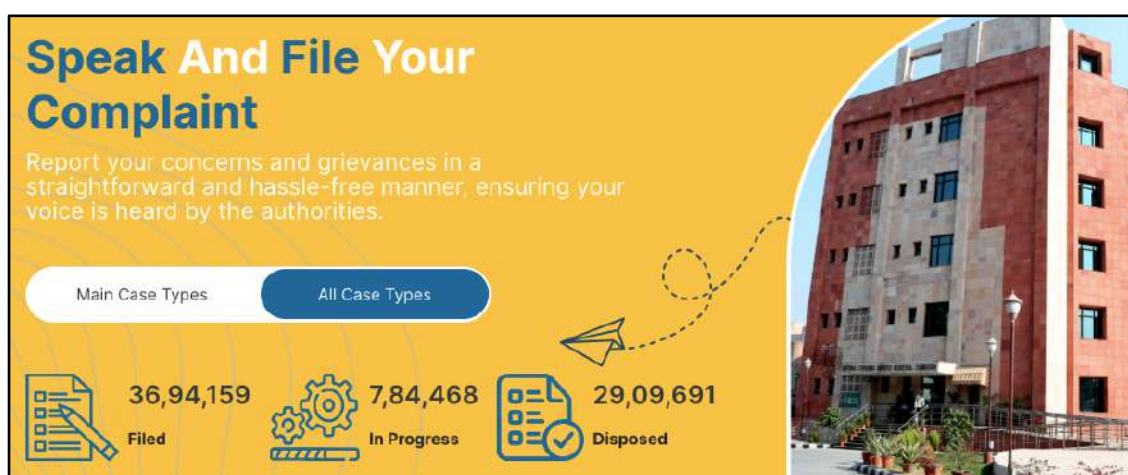
and 8 UTs, **24 States** and **1 UT** have established the Consumer Welfare (Corpus) Funds.

## Strengthening Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanisms

### 1. Expansion of E-Daakhil for Online Consumer Complaints

Going through restrictions on consumers due to COVID-19, the E-Daakhil portal was introduced as **inexpensive, speedy and hassle-free mechanism** for filing consumer complaints. E-Daakhil is an innovative online platform designed to streamline the **consumer grievance redressal process**, providing an efficient and convenient way for consumers to approach the relevant consumer forum, dispensing the need to travel and be physically present to file their grievances. Since its inception, E-Daakhil has been a game-changer in promoting consumer rights and ensuring timely justice.

The portal offers an intuitive and easy-to-navigate interface, allowing consumers to file complaints with minimal effort. From filing complaints to tracking their status, E-Daakhil ensures a paperless and transparent process with respect to filing of cases.



The E-Daakhil portal was first launched on **7<sup>th</sup> September 2020** by the **National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission**. In furtherance to the launching of E-Daakhil across the country, the government has also launched **e-Jagriti**, which will **further streamline case filing, tracking, and management**, ensuring a hassle-free experience for consumers and other stakeholders. It will also facilitate **seamless communication between all parties**, allowing for faster resolution of disputes. By automating and digitizing the process, e-Jagriti will reduce delays, minimize paperwork, and ensure timely disposal of cases, ultimately contributing to a more effective and accessible justice system for consumers.

### 2. Enhancements to the National Consumer Helpline (NCH)

The NCH has emerged as a central point of access for consumers seeking to address their grievances. It has played an essential role in enabling consumers to register complaints and seek resolutions in an efficient and effective manner. To further enhance the consumer grievance redressal process, the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) has rolled out the **NCH 2.0 initiative**, which incorporates advanced technologies to streamline complaint handling. This includes the introduction of **AI-powered Speech Recognition, a Translation System, and a Multilingual Chatbot**. The NCH was upgraded with AI-powered assistance and extended multilingual support to help consumers lodge grievances effectively. Additionally, the helpline was further integrated with various regulatory bodies such as the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** and the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** for swift resolution of consumer issues.

The number of calls received by NCH have grown more than tenfold, from 12,553 in December 2015 to **1,55,138** in **December 2024**. The Department has revamped the **National Consumer Helpline (NCH)**, making it a central platform for grievance redressal at the pre-litigation stage. Available in **17 languages**,

including Hindi, English, and regional languages, the helpline allows consumers to register complaints via the **toll-free number 1915**. Complaints can also be filed through the **Integrated Grievance Redressal Mechanism (INGRAM)** portal, which provides multiple channels such as WhatsApp, SMS, email, the NCH app, web portal, and the **Umang app** for ease of access.



NCH has also partnered with **over 1000 companies** under its **Convergence Programme** to expedite grievance resolution. These companies span major sectors, including e-commerce, travel and tourism, private education, FMCG, consumer durables, electronic products, retail outlets, automobiles, DTH & cable services, and banking. Complaints related to these convergence companies are **directly transferred** to them for online resolution.

### 3. Jaago Grahak Jaago Portal and Mobile App

The **Department of Consumer Affairs** provides **essential e-commerce information** about all URLs during a consumer’s online activities, alerting them if any URL may be unsafe and requires caution, through the **Jaago Grahak Jaago online portal** and the recently launched **mobile application**. These portals are dedicated to **empowering consumers** by providing them with the information, resources and support they need to make informed decisions and assert their rights in the marketplace.



## Consumer Protection in E-Commerce and Digital Transactions

### 1. New E-Commerce Guidelines

To safeguard consumers from unfair trade practices in e-commerce, the Department of Consumer Affairs has also notified the **Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020** under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. These rules, inter-alia, outline the responsibilities of e-commerce entities and specify the liabilities of marketplace and inventory e-commerce entities, including provisions for customer grievance redressal.

The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** issued the **“Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023”** on 30th November, 2023. These guidelines address and regulate **13 specific dark patterns** identified in the e-commerce sector, aiming to prevent deceptive



practices that mislead consumers.

## 2. E-Commerce – Principles and Guidelines for Self-Governance Draft Standard by BIS

The **draft Indian standard on "E-Commerce – Principles and Guidelines for Self-Governance"** by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) aims to establish a transparent, fair, and consumer-friendly framework for online marketplaces. It outlines principles across three key phases—**pre-transaction, contract formation, and post-transaction**—to ensure ethical e-commerce operations. The document mandates **clear product disclosures**, including pricing breakdowns, seller details, country of origin, return policies, and data privacy measures. It enforces explicit consumer consent for transactions, prohibits misleading advertisements, and strengthens grievance redressal mechanisms under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**. Additionally, it introduces strict measures against counterfeit products, unfair trade practices, and preferential treatment of sellers, ensuring a level playing field for all stakeholders.

By prioritizing **consumer rights and fair business practices**, the standard seeks to **empower buyers with greater transparency and security in online transactions**. It prevents deceptive pricing, hidden charges, and forced bundling of services while ensuring **secure payment processes** and clear refund policies. The document also includes **anti-counterfeiting measures**, requiring platforms to swiftly address complaints regarding fake products. Additionally, it mandates that e-commerce platforms **protect consumer data**, obtain explicit consent for marketing communications, and provide accessible mechanisms for dispute resolution. If implemented, this framework will enhance consumer trust in e-commerce, promote ethical business conduct, and create a more accountable digital marketplace in India.

**As India observes World Consumer Rights Day 2025, the focus remains on ensuring a safer, more transparent, and consumer-friendly economy.**

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