



सत्यमेव जयते



**State Consumer Helpline
Knowledge Resource Management Portal**
[Project Supported by Department of Consumer Affairs, Govt. of India]

**OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES
(APRIL – JUNE 2016)**

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Overview of Portal Activities

State Consumer Helpline Knowledge Resource Management Portal (SCHKRMP)

State Consumer Helpline Knowledge Resource Management Portal (SCHKRMP) is a National Nodal Agency supported by Department of Consumer Affairs. The knowledge Resource Management Portal coordinates and monitors the activities of state consumer helplines, provide solutions and advisory services to these helplines, maintain knowledge database and build capacity of the SCH's personnel. The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that all activities of the project are implemented, the complaints are handled appropriately.

Department of Consumer Affairs has recently introduced Grahak Suvidha Kendra (GSK) on a pilot basis in five states viz. Bihar (Patna), Gujarat (Ahmedabad), Karnataka (Bangalore), Rajasthan (Jaipur) and West Bengal (Kolkata). The Portal is also coordinating the activities of these GSKs.

The IT application and knowledge data bases are hosted on the servers at IIPA. The state consumer helplines are given access to use the IT platform and knowledge data base to register the calls/complaints being received by them and provide advise, guidance and information to the callers. The State Governments are required to sign licence agreement with IIPA before giving an access to use the software and knowledge data base. The consumer advisors and coordinators are also provided the soft skills through various training programmes being organized at IIPA in addition to hand hold support at their site wherever it is desired by the state governments. The access to the IT application is internet based with 8 MBPS internet leased line. User ids and password also provide the extension of IT platform hosted on IIPA servers to all the state consumer helplines.

The Portal has also provided Grahak Suvidha Kendra (GSK), the access to use the centralized software and knowledge data base hosted at the IIPA servers after signing necessary Licence Agreement with them. The complaints being received by these GSKs are also registered on the IT Portal.

Some of the complaints being registered on Public Grievance Portal of the Govt. of India are also being forwarded by Department of Consumer Affairs to the Portal which are being looked into for advise, guidance and information expeditiously.

State Consumer Helpline

Department of Consumer Affairs has funded setting up and operationalization of consumer helplines in various States. These State Consumer Helplines have been financially supported for a period of 5 years thereafter the State Governments are expected to run these helplines on their own. The necessary funds as under the scheme are disbursed to the State Government who is setting up the helplines under various models as per their respective policies of the State Governments. While some of the States have gone into subcontracting to involve NGOs/ VCOs and allowed to function in their own premises, some of the States have set up the helplines in their own premises and running the helplines using manpower hired on contract basis directly or through manpower hiring agencies. The monitoring of the helplines is the responsibilities of the respective State Government.

These consumer helplines are receiving calls from the consumers generally through toll free number. The other mode of communications available to the consumers to reach advisors of consumer helplines is through emails, letters, fax and personal visits. The facility is also made available to consumers to register their complaints directly on the website hosted at IIPA servers. These complaints are directed to the respective states from where the complaints are originated.

While consumer helplines are working in 25 States, consumer helplines of 17 States are using the common IT platform for registering the calls and using knowledge database. During the quarter April-June 2016, the State of Andhra Pradesh has been provided with user id and password. These 17 States are now on board with IIPA using centralized IT platform and knowledge database.

States on board

1	Andhra Pradesh	2	Bihar
3	Gujarat	4	Haryana
5	Himachal Pradesh	6	Jharkhand
7	Madhya Pradesh	8	Maharashtra
9	Mizoram	10	Orissa
11	Puducherry	12	Rajasthan
13	Tamil Nadu	14	Telangana
15	Tripura	16	Uttar Pradesh
17	West Bengal		

The total number of States having signed Licence Agreement with IIPA to share IT Portal now stands at 23.

The list of the States who have signed Licence Agreement with IIPA to share the centralized IT Portal is given below:

Sl. No.	State/ UT Name		
1	Andaman & Nicobar	13	Kerala
2	Andhra Pradesh	14	Manipur
3	Arunachal Pradesh	15	Mizoram
4	Bihar	16	Puducherry
5	Chandigarh (UT)	17	Punjab
6	Chhattisgarh	18	Rajasthan
7	Delhi	19	Tamil Nadu
8	Gujarat	20	Telangana
9	Haryana	21	Tripura
10	Himachal Pradesh	22	Uttar Pradesh
11	Jharkhand	23	West Bengal
12	Karnataka		

Even though the helplines are functioning in the States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha duly integrated with IT Portal but these States have not yet signed the agreement formally with IIPA to share IT Portal.

Similarly the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Jharkhand, Andaman & Nicobar, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka despite having signed the Licence Agreement with IIPA were not reflecting any data of call registration suggesting that either the helplines are not functioning in these States or might be using their own software. An intervention of Department of Consumer Affairs was earlier sought vide letter No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/SCH/2015 dtd. 18/12/2015. During the quarter April-June 2016, the State of Jharkhand has started using the common IT Platform and they have already registered 60 calls during the month of June 2016. The other States who have signed the agreement were being pursued to use the common software through letter No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/SCH/2016 dtd.08/06/2016. The copies of these letters were referred to Department of Consumer Affairs for their appropriate intervention.

The seven States viz. Assam, Dadra Nagar & Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Sikkim are yet to sign Licence Agreement with IIPA to share IT Portal. Department of Consumer Affairs was earlier requested for an intervention vide letter No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/SCH/2015 dtd. 17/12/2015. These states were being followed up to sign the said licence agreement sharing the IT Portal vide letter No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/SCH/2016 dtd. 08/06/2016. The copies of these letters were referred to Department of Consumer Affairs for their appropriate intervention.

Statistical Report on Complaints/Calls received by State Consumer Helplines during Quarter April to June, 2016:

The State Consumer Helplines are receiving calls from the consumers through telephone normally toll free number as well as through other mode of communications like letters, emails, walk in consumers as well as consumers logging their calls directly on the website using online complaint registration. The online complaint registration is

also used by the consumers in the States which are not yet networked with IT Portal. The statistical data pertaining to the call received/ complaint registered is given below:

States Wise Call Report April - June 2016

Sl. No.	State Name	April	May	June
1	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR	0	0	1
2	ANDHRA PRADESH	0	0	0
3	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0
4	ASSAM	0	0	0
5	BIHAR	34	101	82
6	CHANDIGARH	0	20	1
7	CHATTISGARH	0	0	0
8	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	0	0	0
9	DAMAN & DIU	0	0	0
10	GOA	0	0	2
11	GUJARAT	934	976	1168
12	HARYANA	183	655	335
13	HIMACHAL PRADESH	0	0	0
14	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	1	0	0
15	JHARKHAND	0	0	60
16	KARNATAKA	12	107	45
17	KERALA	0	0	0
18	LAKSHADWEEP	0	0	0
19	MADHYA PRADESH	0	0	0
20	MAHARASHTRA	1020	1077	1029
21	MANIPUR	0	0	0
22	MEGHALAYA	0	0	0
23	MIZORAM	2	0	0
24	NAGALAND	0	0	0
25	NCT DELHI	1	1	1
26	ODISHA	34	60	8
27	PUDUCHERRY	495	460	445
28	PUNJAB	0	0	0
29	RAJASTHAN	347	745	1136
30	SIKKIM	0	0	0
31	TAMIL NADU	4	0	0
32	TELANGANA	955	994	1305
33	TRIPURA	6	3	5
34	UTTAR PRADESH	192	339	286
35	UTTRAKHAND	0	0	0
36	WEST BENGAL	761	824	664
	Total	4981	6362	6573

The States of Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have been running the helpline intermittently. Similarly Govt. of Punjab, Karnataka have not yet networked their helpline with IT Portal despite imparting of trainings and having

signed the Licence Agreement to share IT Portal for complaint registration and use of knowledge database. The sector wise list of calls received during the month of April to June 2016 is given below:

Sector Wise Calls Received

SECTOR WISE NUMBER OF CALLS (APRIL - JUNE 2016)				
Sl. No	SECTOR WISE NUMBER OF CALLS	April	May	June
1	AADHAAR CARD	46	19	26
2	ADVERTISEMENT	8	5	9
3	AIRLINES	11	18	14
4	BANKING	142	142	137
5	DOMESTIC APPLIANCES	277	415	243
6	E COMMERCE	235	247	171
7	EDUCATION	47	71	56
8	ELECTRICITY	69	121	94
9	FINANCE	49	58	56
10	FOOD AND BEVERAGES	25	26	21
11	FOOD AND SUPPLY	66	252	251
12	GAS LPG	54	47	76
13	INSURANCE	77	89	99
14	LEGAL METROLOGY	65	109	30
15	MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE	35	31	23
16	PETROLEUM LPG PNG CNG	64	126	75
17	POSTAL	35	46	29
18	PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM	613	823	1259
19	RAILWAYS	17	19	18
20	REAL ESTATE	114	144	126
21	TELECOM	300	326	274
22	TOURISM	17	26	27
23	TRANSPORT	11	32	6
24	OTHERS	2519	2940	3301
	Total	4896	6132	6421

Capacity Building of State Consumer Helplines

IIPA has been imparting training to the consumers and coordinators of State Consumer Helpline. It has imparted training to all the States other than the four States namely Dadra Nagar and Haveli, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep and Meghalaya who have not attended any of the training programme despite inviting for the nominations for the training. IIPA has conducted 10 training programmes so far with a total participation of 275 personnel from 32 States/ UTs. In addition to the 10 training programme conducted so far at IIPA, New Delhi, the Portal has also extended hand-holding support at site to the helplines at Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The 10th training programme was conducted at IIPA during 7th-9th June 2016. The States of Lakshadweep, Tripura, Dadra Nagar & Haveli, Chhattisgarh, Chandigarh (UT), Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh were requested to nominate their consumer advisors and coordinators for the 10th Training Programme. Three participants from Jharkhand State Consumer Helpline and 11 participants from Grahak Suvidha Kendra deputed their personnel for attending the said training programme. Even though the Chhattisgarh State Consumer Helpline nominated four participants to attend the said training programme, but no one attended the training programme. Similarly the nomination from the State of Madhya Pradesh was received only at the last moment and hence it was difficult to include them in the said training programme.

An updated list of the details of the training programmes conducted so far is given in the next page.

24	Mizoram			✓									1
25	Nagaland			✓									1
26	Orissa	✓											1
27	Puducherry				✓		✓		✓				3
28	Punjab		✓			✓		✓				✓	4
29	Rajasthan			✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	5
30	Sikkim	✓	✓					✓					3
31	Tamilnadu				✓				✓	✓			3
32	Telangana								✓	✓			2
33	Tripura				✓					✓			2
34	Uttar Pradesh	✓				✓		✓				✓	4
35	Uttarakhand								✓				1
36	West Bengal	✓					✓			✓	✓		4
	Total No. of Participants	27	18	20	22	24	22	17	18	15	14	78	275

Online Complaints:

The IT Portal facilitates the consumers to register their complaints online giving them an access on 24x7 basis. Numbers of consumers have been registering their complaints/queries online at IT Portal. These complaints are directly diverted to the State Consumer Helplines who are using our IT Portal. These State Consumer Helplines take appropriate actions on such dockets. The complaints for those States which are not using IT Portal are downloaded and are regularly transmitted electronically to those States to take appropriate steps. While forwarding those complaints electronically, the States are also being requested to join the IT Portal. However, the States who either do not have functioning helpline or is yet to be networked with IT Portal are not responding back to IIPA on these online complaints.

The following table provides the number of complaints registered for these States which are yet to use our IT Portal. However, there is no feedback from these States on the complaints forwarded to them for appropriate action.

Online Complaint During 2016

Online Complaint During 1st April 2016 to 31st June 2016		
Sl. No	State Name	Complaint Received
1	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR	1
2	BIHAR	72
3	GUJARAT	12
4	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	1
5	KARNATAKA	5
6	MAHARASHTRA	2
7	NCT DELHI	3
8	ODISHA	2
9	RAJASTHAN	82
10	TELANGANA	2
11	TRIPURA	5
12	WEST BENGAL	7
	Total	194

Opinion Poll:

The opinion has been sought from the consumers through our online IT Portal. A list of the issues uploaded on the Portal is given below. Some of the responses as received were analyzed and used for our advocacy papers.

Sl. No.	Poll Question	Expiry Date	Yes	No	Can't say
1	Do you think service charges being charged by Restaurants are Government taxes/ duties	15/4/16	6	3	1

Complaints received at PG Portal

The Portal is also being forwarded with the complaints received at Public Grievance Portal run by Govt. of India. During the quarter April- June 2016, 334 complaints were forwarded to IT Portal from PG Portal. 265 complaints were disposed of with appropriate advise, guidance and information. The report as downloaded from PG Portal is given below:

Period: 1st April – 30th June 2016

Grievance source	Receipt during the period	Cases disposed of during the period	Closing balance as on 30/6/ 2016
DARPG	35	52	0
Local/ internet	53	84	0
Pension	1	2	0
PMO	48	68	0
President Secretariat	1	2	0
Total	138	208	0

Consumer Advocacy

Advocacies- Others

- Ola / Uber cabs have been adapting to unfair business practices in Bangalore wherein the passengers are being charged toll tax from the passengers for dropping the passengers at Bangalore Airport despite no such charges applicable. The issue was taken up with both cab operators during March/April 2016. However, the operator continue to charge the toll tax which otherwise is not chargeable being not applicable. The issue was later taken up through Grahak Suvudha Kendra at Bangalore with Govt. of Karnataka and Addl. Commissioner of Police (Traffic).
- Dakshin Harayan Bijli Vitran Nigam(DHBVN) would be charging an additional amount of Rs. 50/- per application for online application for getting electricity connection. The DISCOMs site also mention charging of 1% surcharge plus service tax for making

online payment of electricity bill by DISCOMs in Haryana. Such charging of additional amount for online application for electricity connection and surcharge for online payment of electricity bill is anti-consumer practices (as well as unethical business practices in violation of RBI regulations). Portal had drawn the attention of DHBVN vide email dtd.17 June 2016 and vide letter No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/ELECTRICITY/2016 dtd. 22 JUNE 2016, a copy of which was referred to Secretary, Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission.

3. The Portal brought out some of the fraudulent business practices through E-commerce and Finance Frauds sought appropriate intervention of Department of Consumer Affairs vide letter No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/e-commerce/2016 dtd. 04/05/2016. Some of the problems being faced by the shoppers while making online purchases are: (i) Most of the e-commerce site do not have details like postal address, Mobile No., T.No., emails Ids of their consumer grievance system on their “contact us” page. Even many sites do not have a system of acknowledging the complaint. In absence of details about consumer grievance system, it becomes difficult to escalate the complaint. (ii) Many sites are turning to be frauds. The payment is taken from the consumer and then the company vanish away untraceable or their mobiles switched off or using new numbers. (iii) Many sites intentionally either do not deliver the product or deliver the defective material and keep on replacing the product. Many complaints have been seen on various public domains that the company stops responding to complainant after sending useless or defective items especially in garment and allied items. The companies either do not refund the money paid by consumer or take inordinate time in making the refund. Many complaints of such nature keep on being reported. Thus the companies are being retained with huge consumer’s money for unethical gains. (iv) The fraudulent activities are on the increase disproportionately and there is inadequate system to address such complaints. (v) Sometimes the products are ordered on special occasions but marketing companies fails to deliver the product to suit the need of special occasions thus defeating the very purpose of ordering. (vi) Unbelievable discounts or prices are being offered to attract rather lure the consumers to order and pay the amount and later on disappear after getting payments.
4. The Portal brought out some of Misleading advertisements of retailers – 0% finance, free insurance etc. being offered in purchase of high value items specially electronics computers/laptops and automobiles. There are several pertinent points that the consumer could be at a loss if he buys the product on getting misled, prominently if the motor vehicle are insured by the dealer on the pretext that no insurance premium is chargeable, the primary reason of the loss is foregoing of no claim bonus accruing to them from their old vehicles. SCHKRMP have been doing mystery shopping and has sufficient reason to substantiate the claims that such advertisement are not only misleading but also adapting to unethical business practices. A case study on recent advertisement of Sargam Electronics advertising availability of 0% finance was taken

up. The attention of the Department of Consumer Affairs was drawn by the portal Vide letter No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/Misleading/2016 dtd. 21/06/2016 regarding misleading advertisement in such retail business.

5. An escalated complaint regarding under weight of Colgate Pro-sensitive tooth paste (62.3 gms as against marked net weight of 70 gms) was forwarded to Department of Consumer Affairs for appropriate attention with following observation:
 - a.) Empty Tube which shows its weight with its cap as 14.1 gms weight.
 - b.) New Tube with its cap & the seal intact as 76.4 gms weight.

It means the contents of the tube are 62.3 gms as against the net weight mentioned on the Tube is 70 gms. It amounts to contents short by 7.6 gms (approx.. 11%). It is an expensive paste costing Rs. 150 per tube.

A list of such issues is given in the next page.

SCHKRMP- ADVOCACY			
Sl. No.	Letter no. & Date	Complaint/Issue forwarded to	Subject reference
			OLA Cabs
1	Letter dtd. 01/04/2016 through Grahak Suvidha Kendra, Karnataka and Email dtd. 28/04/2016	Department of Consumer Affairs, Govt. of Karnataka and Additional Commissioner of Police, Bangalore	Unfair Trade Practices of charging toll tax on no-toll payable roads by OLA CABS in Bangalore for journey between City to Airport
			Electricity
3	Email dtd. 17/06/2016	Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam and Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission	charging of additional fee for online application for electricity connection and payment of electricity bills as per NBT news dtd.13 June 2016
4	Ref.No.IIPA/SCHKRMP/ELECTRICITY/2016 DTD 22/06/2016	Secretary Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission	Charging of additional fee for online submission of application for electricity connection and payment of electricity bills as appeared in NBT dtd. 13 June 2016 and information on public domains.
			Misleading advertisement
5	Ref. No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/Misleading/2016 dt.21/06/2016	Department of Consumer Affairs	Misleading advertisement of retailer- 0% Finance, free insurance etc. - A case study on recent advertisement of Sargam Electronics advertising availability of 0% finance.
6	Ref. No. IIPA/SCHKRMP/e-commerce/2016 dtd. 04 May 2016	Department of Consumer Affairs	Report and recommendation on E-commerce and Financial Frauds
7	Email dated 30 May 2016	Department of Consumer Affairs	Unfair Business Practices by Procter & Gamble (Colgate Co.)

Other activities

- Project Manager, SCHKRMP and Project Director visited Chandigarh for a meeting with Chandigarh Administration during 5th -6th April 2016 in connection with proposed setting up of a Consumer Helpline and training at Chandigarh (UT)
- Session on “Telecom and Consumer” on 29th April 2016 in 92nd Orientation Training Programme for the President and Members of District Forums held in IIPA during 25th – 29th April 2016
- Meeting on “Timely disposal of public grievances” held in Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi on 13th May 2016
- A National Seminar - cum - Exhibition was organized by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India at Patna, Bihar on 17th May 2016. The exhibition was inaugurated by Hon’ble Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. Centre for Consumer Studies, Indian Institute of Public Administration also participated jointly with Department of Consumer Affairs in the exhibition held at Shri Krishna Memorial Hall, Patna. Over 2500 participants attended the seminar addressed by Hon’ble Minister Shri Ram Vilas Paswan on the achievements of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and further plans for strengthening availability of pulses and other essential commodities.
- A visit to Grahak Suvudha Kendra, Patna was made by Shri S.K Virmani, Project Manager, SCHKRMP on 18th May 2016. Shri S.K Virmani interacted with the advisors and counselors on the issues faced by consumers in Bihar and redressal mechanism for some of the major sectors like Telecom, Banking, Insurance, Electricity, E-commerce and Domestic Goods.
- Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA organized 19th Training of Trainers Programme for the Faculty of Training Institutions on Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare from May 16 – 20, 2016. 19 Participants from various training institutes visited SCHKRMP on 18th May 2016 to get knowledge on advise giving to consumers in complaint redressal through state consumer helplines. Project Manager, SCHKRMP had attended valedictory session on 20th May 2016.
- Participation in National Consultation Meeting of Ministers of States & UTs held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 21th May 2016
- Two days workshop on “Consumer Protection and Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Collaboration with Regional Training Centre Ghaziabad of SIRD Lucknow” was held at Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh during May 23 - 24, 2016. The Project Manager, SCHKRMP, Shri S.K Virmani addressed the participants on issues related to Telecom sector and redressal mechanism on 24th May 2016. The participants were shared with knowledge about frequent

occurring problems in Telecom Services and the Service Benchmarks as laid down by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

- Three students of 2nd year BBA LLB (Hons) from North Campus University, Gurgaon have undergone four week internship with CCS, IIPA during 21st June to 20th July 2016. They were acquainted with the functioning of State Consumer Helplines in empowering consumers through awareness, advise, guidance and information and were shared with the data pertaining to the e-commerce industry.
- Two Day Seminar on Consumer Protection and Empowerment for Govt. Officers Helplines Councillors and other Stakeholders in collaboration with IIPA and State Consumer Helpline held at Puducherry on 23rd -24th June 2016. Prof. Suresh Misra, Dr. Mamta Pathania and Shri G.N.Sreekumaran attended the seminar.
- Additional Secretary Ministry of Consumer Affairs visited to SCHKRMP for Review of the functioning of the SCH on 17th June 16
- Attended 13th Pragati Meeting “Pro - Active Governance and Timely Implementation” held at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi on 29th June 2016

Knowledge Creation:

The IT Portal is being continuously updated with uploading of knowledge based database. Some of the recent updates have been on:

1. Acts and regulations of various services- Railways Act, BIS Act, Electricity Act, FSSAI Act.
2. Sector wise FAQs – Railways Refund Rules, Legal Metrology, Non-Banking Finance Companies
3. Consumer advisories- Cancellation of railway tickets, consumer rights vs. responsibilities, visit to heritage and monuments
4. Quarterly Newsletter “Consumer Connect”
5. Monthly “Consumer Bulletin”
6. FOPs and the benchmark of services wherever specified
7. Contact details of service providers
8. Newspaper Reports (331 Nos) on consumer issues.

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