

Consumer Rights Outreach Deepens as New Capacity-Building Series for Gram Panchayats is Launched

Inaugural session connects multiple States virtually

Training on Consumer Protection Act and redressal systems

Scalable digital format ensures nationwide reach

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Building on the success of its virtual capacity-building initiatives conducted during 2024 and 2025, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) has launched the second series of its nationwide virtual capacity-building programme for Gram Panchayats across States and Union Territories. The series was inaugurated on February 13, 2026, in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, with the objective of deepening consumer awareness and strengthening protection mechanisms at the grassroots level.



The first interaction under the renewed initiative was held with the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha. The session witnessed participation through 1,011 online links, reaching thousands of stakeholders at the Panchayat level. Participants were sensitized on key consumer rights, emerging consumer issues, and the institutional mechanisms available for grievance redressal. The programme also enabled direct interaction, allowing Panchayat representatives to raise field-level concerns and seek clarifications.

The session emphasized the critical role of Panchayats in promoting consumer rights, curbing unfair trade practices, and facilitating access to grievance platforms such as the National Consumer Helpline (1915) and the e-Jagriti portal. In its earlier phase, the Department conducted an extensive series of virtual

sensitization sessions for Panchayati Raj representatives on consumer rights, responsibilities, and redressal frameworks under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The campaign commenced on December 20, 2024, and concluded on August 22, 2025, covering Panchayats across all States and Union Territories, except Delhi and Chandigarh, where Panchayati Raj Institutions are not constituted.



A key highlight of the initiative has been its emphasis on regional inclusivity. Sessions were conducted in the respective regional languages to ensure effective communication, wider participation, and better comprehension at the grassroots level. Proceedings were chaired by officers proficient in the concerned State languages, enabling direct engagement and meaningful dialogue with participants. This approach significantly enhanced responsiveness and encouraged active field-level participation.

The initiative has contributed substantially to strengthening the capacity of Panchayat representatives as facilitators of consumer protection within their communities. By equipping local institutions with practical knowledge of consumer rights and redressal systems, the programme has supported the creation of a more informed and empowered rural consumer base.

The virtual format has further demonstrated advantages of cost efficiency, scalability, and rapid nationwide outreach, enabling large-scale engagement within a short period. Encouraged by the positive outcomes and constructive feedback received from States and Union Territories, the Department has decided to continue and expand the programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, with a renewed focus on deepening last-mile consumer awareness.

Through this sustained effort, the Department reiterates its commitment to ensuring that consumer awareness permeates every tier of governance, empowering citizens particularly in rural areas to make informed choices and access timely grievance redressal

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