

Government of India
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

PRESS RELEASE

Conclusions of the Fifth National Consultation meeting of Ministers of States/UTs In-charge of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs

Held on 3rd September 2019 at VigyanBhawan, New Delhi

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Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution organised the Fifth National Consultation Meeting of Ministers of States/UTs to deliberate on the issues concerning consumer empowerment, protection and welfare as well as on portability of ration card, automation of fair price shops and adhaar seeding etc. The Ministerial level meeting was chaired by the Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, with participation from Ministers from States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. President, NCDRC was also present on the occasion

Hon'ble Minister informed that the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 has been notified and discussed the major provisions of the same. He also mentioned that drafting of Rules are under process. He requested the participants to provide suggestions on rules under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. He also suggested that states may look at simplification of the Essential Commodities Act, including penalty provisions that would make it more attuned to the government's policy regarding 'ease of doing business' and promote investment.

He also indicated all States are covered under NFSA now as against only 11 States in 2014. He emphasised the need for larger participation of States in fortification of rice. He also indicated that portability of ration card is being promoted for the welfare of users.

Hon'ble Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public distribution mentioned that the concerted efforts put in by the Central Government and State Governments towards controlling Inflation through improved production and appropriate market interventions have paid dividends. The prices of pulses could be contained due to appropriate Government interventions including buffer operations.

Minister mentioned that Government has a buffer of about 14 LMT of pulses under PSF while another about 13 LMT of pulses are available under PSS. Also, Government has also built a buffer of onion of about 56000 MT. States/ UTs Governments may lift the stock of pulses and onions from the central buffer for the purpose of direct retailing through Cooperatives/ States agencies/ marketing federation etc. or retailing through their PDS outlets, to moderate its prices during lean season. States/ UT Governments may place their demand for pulses and onions from the buffer to NAFED/ DoCA.

Mr RaosahebDadaraoDanve, Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution while addressing the audience mentioned that there is a need for effective and time bound implementation of digitisation of PDS system including resolving connectivity problems and ePOS machine installation in all locations and land availability for constructing godowns by FCI etc . He mentioned that specific problems faced by certain States can be discussed for finding a solution to the challenges faced by them.

The National Conference further noted that empowering consumer and ensuring their welfare is the joint responsibility of Government of India and the State Governments.The achievement of this objective entails coordinated action by all. Accordingly, the National Consultation agreed to adopt an Action Plan to be implemented over next year:

1. States to map vulnerable areas prone to supply shortages for special monitoring and ensure that “stock-out” situations do not occur especially for essential food items of common consumption.
2. States to mobilize existing storage capacity utilizing the Government/private/cooperative storage infrastructure to ensure that adequate decentralized stocks are maintained across different cities/rural areas of the State to ensure adequate supplies of perishable essential food commodities.
3. Senior Officers such as the District Commissioners/Collectors in the District and the Municipal Commissioners in the cities/towns may be designated as focal points for monitoring the availability and price trends of the essential food commodities.
4. States may regularly review and supervise the price collected at their centres through designated/ nominated nodal officer. States may also set-up new centres especially in rural/ semi urban areas as well as undertake 3rd party validation of their data
5. States to provide prices data on all seven days of the week. States may send their proposal for strengthening their centres as well as setting up new centres as per the revised guidelines.
6. States to hold meetings with the dealers of essential food items especially pulses and onions, and regularly review prices for intervention requirement, if any. States may also keep Government of India informed of notable adverse price movements/trends.
7. A buffer of about 14 LMT of pulses and 56,000 MT of onions is already available under PSF. States may utilize the stock for mitigating price volatility in these commodities by utilizing them for their respective welfare schemes like MDM, ICDS, PDS, etc. and for retailing.
8. State may consider setting up their own State Level PSF and may also indicate clauses in the PSF Guidelines that is limiting their participation.
9. States may offer their views on rationalizing the provisions in EC Act that may promote ‘**Make in India**’ and ‘**Ease of Doing Businesses**’ without adversely affecting the consumer protection/welfare within 30 days.
10. Keeping the objective of doubling farmer’s income in view, States may suggest amendments in provisions of EC Act or its Orders that may need liberalization to promote investment in the farm sector and allied supply chain activities.
11. States may initiate action for filling up of existing/anticipated vacancies of President and Member in the State Commissions and District Forum and endeavor to complete the selection process in time-bound manner.
12. Funds released for construction of toilets under the scheme “Clean Consumer Fora” may be utilised within next three months and apprise the status.

13. States may utilize the funds released for installation of CCTVs in the State Commissions within three months and confirm the action taken.
14. All the old cases be entered into the CONFONET System within next three months.
15. States may furnish inputs on the draft e-commerce guidelines within the stipulated date i.e. 15th Sep. 2019.
16. States and the State Commissions/District Fora may furnish inputs for framing of rules under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 by 15th September 2019.
17. States to enforce the provision of Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) rules in letter and spirit and the enforcement data may be submitted online on a weekly basis at [URL:-https://consumerhelpline.gov.in/gst/lm](https://consumerhelpline.gov.in/gst/lm)
18. State Governments which have not adopted the National Building Code of India , 2016 of the Bureau of India Standards in their local/ relevant building bye-laws may do so promptly. State Governments may also send their proposals for establishing or revising standards in area of relevance to State economy
19. Transfer of the funds to States under Central Sector Schemes are to be routed to the Implementing Agencies directly. No funds under such scheme would be transferred in the absence of PFMS details of such agencies. There is urgency of identification of I.A.s and their registration in PFMS by States/UTs.
20. All the States and UTs to submit proposals duly complete in all respect to facilitate prompt allocation/release of funds in respect of different schemes of the Department.
21. For Consumer empowerment and protection this Department has been providing funds to the State Governments through various schemes. States have to:
 - a. Utilize the funds as per the time schedule of utilization and provide requisite UCs timely.
 - b. Provide land for construction of Consumer Fora buildings, legal metrology labs etc., so that there is no delay in utilization of funds and outcome of the schemes implementation.
 - c. Report awareness generation activities undertaken to this Department regularly.
22. Installation of ePoS devices to go up to 5 lakh or more in the country
 - By next year, the number of installed devices in the country is envisaged to go up to **>5 Lakh**
 - Presently, ePoS devices are installed in **4.32 Lakh** out of total 5.35 Lakh FPSs in the country
 - **Nearly >1 Lakh ePoS devices are expected to be installed in next one year** in following 10 majorly pending States:

Sl.	State	No. of total FPSs	No. of Pending ePoS devices
1	Assam	38,237	38,237 (100%)
2	Bihar	41,483	35,114 (85%)
3	Uttarakhand	9,908	6,637 (67%)
4	West Bengal	20,806	6,319 (30%)
5	Meghalaya	4,736	4,726 (100%)
6	Manipur	2,682	2,672 (100%)
7	Delhi	2,254	2,254 (100%)
8	Arunachal Pradesh	1,943	1,918 (99%)
9	Nagaland	1,691	1,691 (100%)
10	Mizoram	1,252	1,252 (100%)
	Total	1,24,992	1,00,820(81%)

23. Intra-State Portability of Ration Card holders (within State/UT)

➤ Already, fully implemented in **11 States** of –

- Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura

➤ **By March 2020:** Plan to start in another **13 States** (having ePoS installed in all FPSs) in entire State/UT of –

- Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

24. Inter-State Portability of Ration Card holders

➤ **Start in 2 more clusters of States – w.e.f. 1st October 2019:**

- Kerala and Karnataka
- Haryana and Rajasthan

- **Integration of clusters – w.e.f. 1st January 2020:**
 - **Integration of 4 existing clusters (8 States), i.e. –**
 - ✓ Andhra Pradesh and Telangana,
 - ✓ Maharashtra and Gujarat,
 - ✓ Kerala and Karnataka, and
 - ✓ Haryana and Rajasthan
 - On-boarding and **integration of 3 more States** of Punjab, Jharkhand and Tripura, where Intra-State Portability is already implemented.
 - On-boarding and **integration of other States/UTs** – As per the required readiness of State/UT.
 - Minister level delegation will visit North-East States to review the progress of ePOS in the region
25. Completion of Supply Chain Management
- By March 2020: Completion of pending implementation/ operationalisation in remaining States of – Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya. Senior Officers from the department will monitor the progress of the automation in these regions.