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GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

Office of the Commissioner of
Civil Supplies, Hyderabad-082.

CCS Ref. No. G2/CPC/3976/2004.

Dated: 04-06-2005.

Sub: CONSUMER AFFAIRS – District Consumer Information Centers in
the State – Guidelines on functioning and utilization of funds by
DCICs – Communication of – Regarding.

Ref: 1. D.O. Lr. No.1055/CS.III(2)/2003, dated 10-08-04 of DCS., Hyd.
2.Proc. No.1055/CS.III(2)/2003, dated 10-08-04 of DCS., Hyderabad.

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A copy of the Guidelines on functioning of District Consumer Information Centers and utilization of funds is communicated herewith to the officers noted in the address entry. All the officers noted in the address entry are requested to follow the Guidelines scrupulously in the functioning of District Consumer Information Centers and utilization of funds released.

Receipt of this memo may be acknowledged.

Sd/- Bhanwar Lal,
Commissioner of Civil Supplies.

Encl: Guidelines.

To
The Joint Collectors.
The Chief Executive Officers, Zilla Parishads.
The District Supply Officers.
The District Public Relations Officers.
The In charges, District Consumer Information Centers.
Copy to Stock File / Spare.

// ATTESTED //

Neeajit T
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (CA).

4/6/05

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SCHEME OF DISTRICT CONSUMER INFORMATION CENTRES

Guidelines on Functioning and Utilization of Funds - JA -

INTRODUCTION

Despite the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 awareness among a large section of needy people regarding the rights of the consumers and how to exercise those rights etc., still remains very weak due to inadequate spread of knowledge / information. To spread this awareness, the Government of India created Consumer Welfare Fund in the year 1992, to promote and protect consumer welfare by amending the Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944, wherein, money refundable to manufacturers which could not be refunded due to lack of identity is being credited. Similarly, the Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh has also established A.P. State Consumer Welfare Fund by mobilizing resources through budgetary and voluntary support.

The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India had felt that unless each district in the country have at least one consumer information centre geared to meet the consumer requirements for awareness generation, consumer protection related activities would continue to have negligible impact on the ground. Accordingly, the scheme of establishing District Consumer Information Centers is designed for implementation in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

AIM

The main aim of setting up of a District Consumer Information Centre is to spread consumerism and to lead the consumer movement with the participation of people of all sectors spread over in the district.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aim in setting up of District Consumer Information Centre, they should work with the following objectives:

- To bring about desired changes in the consumer for self realization.
- To provide assistance to consumers to solve problems through an intimate personal relationship.
- To initialize consumers to establish their rights.
- To motivate consumers to realize their responsibilities.
- To organize consumers to fight against unfair trade practices
- To spread the spirit of consumerism
- To protect the interests of consumers of different sectors and region.

FOCUS

Main focus of District Consumer Information Centre is laid on educating the consumers on their responsibilities and encouraging them

- To be alert and question about defective goods and deficiencies in services;
- To conduct the quality tests of the products offered for sale;
- To search for adequate information on labels;
- To enable the consumers to exercise their choice by comparison;
- To promote the consumers to furnish information on various products / services and its compliance; guarantee and warranty;
- To revolt against the misleading advertisements and take corrective steps;
- To join and act together to strengthen consumer movement.

LOCATION

It is felt that the Panchayat Raj Institutions should be actively involved in implementing the scheme of District Consumer Information Centre.

Therefore, the District Consumer Information Centre is preferred to be set up in Zilla Parishad Office at the District Headquarter. If there is any problem of space or accessibility to set up District Consumer Information Centre in Zilla Parishad, the DCIC may be set up in Collectorate Complex or the building complex of District Consumer Forums, wherever suitable accommodation can be arranged.

CVO or In charge of District Consumer Information Centre

Any representative of the Consumer Voluntary Organization of repute in the District shall be made as in charge of District Consumer Information Centre by the Collector & District Magistrate concerned on the proposal of the District Supply Officer of the District.

The representative of Consumer Voluntary Organisation appointed as Incharge of the District Consumer Information Centre is responsible for planning and implementing the programme and running the District Consumer Information Centre effectively.

The representative of Consumer Voluntary Organisation appointed as Incharge of the District Consumer Information Centre is responsible for preparing annual budget, placing before the Monitoring Committee for scrutiny and approval, submission of the same to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies & Ex-Officio Secretary to Government, Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Department for release of funds.

STAFF

One Information Organiser (IO) and one Assistant may be appointed on contract basis in the District Consumer Information Centre by the Collector & District Magistrate in consultation with the Monitoring Committee on consolidated pay purely on temporary basis.

The Information Organiser shall possess minimum Degree qualification with computer knowledge.

The Assistant shall possess minimum Intermediate qualification with computer knowledge.

The consolidated pay will be decided by the Monitoring Committee through negotiation and basing on the funds available at District Consumer Information Centre.

Working Hours

The District Consumer Information Centre shall function on all working days from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

FUNCTIONS

1. The District Consumer Information Centre (DCIC) shall act as a catalyst in spreading consumer movement, in creating consumer awareness and in enlightening the consumers about their legal rights and responsibilities.
2. The DCIC shall act as counseling and guidance centre to consumers.
3. The DCIC shall disseminate information on all aspects of consumer protection i.e., legal, administrative, information regarding consumer courts and their procedure, information relating to consumer organizations in the area, anti poverty / welfare / development programmes. The DCIC will be responsible for disseminating such information not only to the direct users in the centre but to all local bodies of rural and urban area.
4. The DCIC shall liaise with District Weights & Measures authority / laboratories in tackling issues relating to quality, weights, adulteration, unfair trade practices. Where Governmental laboratories are not available, the DCIC will liaise with private testing laboratories, if available, to use their facility on payment of fee.
5. The DCIC shall maintain close interaction with the officials of
 - a. Prevention of Food Adulteration Department
 - b. Municipalities and Gram Panchayats
 - c. Legal Metrology (Weights & Measures)
 - d. Drug Control Administration
 - e. Agriculture Department
 - f. Electricity Distribution Companies
 - g. Transport Department including APSRTC



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- h. Bureau of Indian Standards
 - i. All other departments which are directly or indirectly concerned with consumers and consumer affairs.
6. The DCIC shall develop a data base of the Consumer Voluntary Organizations in the District and Consumer related information such as manufacturers of goods and providers of services, fair price shops, availability of essential commodities, market trends, new products, providing warranty and guarantee systems, latest information on the Government / private Health and Education services.
 7. The DCIC shall organize all important functions to generate consumer awareness such as World Consumer Rights Day, National Consumer Day, World Environmental Day.
 8. The DCIC shall have access to NICNET / INTERNET to disseminate the information. For this purpose, installation of computer with internet facility is necessary.
 9. The DCIC shall prepare monthly and annual calendar of activities in advance under the guidance and scrutiny of Monitoring Committee
 10. The DCIC shall disseminate all information regarding Legal Service Authority providing full range of legal services free of cost and maintain liaison with the Authority.
 11. The DCIC shall maintain a Visitors Book and a Suggestion book at the centre.
 12. The DCIC In charge shall furnish a report on awareness programmes conducted in a month to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies & Ex-Officio Secretary to Government, Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Department.
 13. The DCIC shall release a monthly newsletter and conduct one interaction meeting in a month with the officials of various departments at District / Division / Mandal level.
 14. The complaints received in the DCIC shall be forwarded immediately to the concerned department and the concerned departments shall redress the complaint within fifteen days.
 15. The DCIC shall conduct special meetings in the centre by inviting and involving subject experts.
 16. The DCIC shall display latest and important information regarding all the Government Departments / Agencies concerned with the public affairs / consumers and motivate them to come up with Citizen's Charter.
 17. The DCIC shall access, coordinate, monitor, disseminate information and guide the consumers / public in the district.
 18. The DCIC shall co-ordinate with all the stakeholders, particularly, self help groups, youth organizations, voluntary organizations, ICDS workers in creating Consumer Awareness.
 19. The DCIC shall prepare necessary action plan to create awareness in rural areas by organizing week-end consumer awareness camps at Mandal headquarters involving the CVOs / Presidents / Members of District Consumer Forums.
 20. The DCIC shall be accessible to all the Voluntary Organizations functioning in the district through personal contact / e-mail etc.
 21. The DCIC shall organize rallies, seminars, quiz, elocution programmes etc., at Divisional / Mandal levels at regular intervals.
 22. The DCIC shall display the important Judgments, delivered by the District Consumer Fora / State Commission / National Commission, at the centre.
 23. The DCIC shall maintain a library with all the magazines / journals / newspapers connected with consumer affairs.

Monitoring committee

A Monitoring Committee with the following shall be constituted to monitor the progress of the activities of District Consumer Information Centre:

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| 1. District Collector or Joint Collector | - | Chair Person |
| 2. Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad or his nominee | - | Member |
| 3. Representatives of the active Consumer Voluntary Organizations, other than the In charge of DCIC in the district | - | Member |
| 4. District Public Relation Officer | - | Member |
| 5. District Supply Officer | - | Member – Convener |

Functions of Monitoring Committee

- The Monitoring Committee shall scrutinize and finalize annual calendar of activities of District Consumer Information Centre in advance every year and send to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies & Ex-Officio Secretary to Government, Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Department for approval.
- The Monitoring Committee shall approve the monthly calendar consisting of awareness programmes to be organized and prepared by the District Consumer Information Centre.
- The Monitoring Committee shall meet at least once in a month and review the overall performance of the District Consumer Information Centre with reference to the calendar of activities and on utilization of funds and send their review report to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies & Ex-Officio Secretary to Government, Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Department.
- The Monitoring Committee shall scrutinize and select the Information Organizer and Assistant proposed by the District Supply Officer and send to the Collector & District Magistrate for engaging their services in District Consumer Information Centre.
- The Monitoring Committee shall negotiate and finalize the consolidated remuneration for Information Organizer and Assistant keeping in view the funds available with the District Consumer Information Centre.
- The Monitoring Committee shall scrutinize and finalize the budget of the District Consumer Information Centre every year and furnish to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies & Ex-Officio Secretary to Government, Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Department for approval.

Financial Assistance / Funds to the District Consumer Information Centre

The Government of India or State Government will sanction financial assistance for the functioning of District Consumer Information Centre for a limited period in the initial stage.

To run the DCIC even without any financial assistance by Government, the in charge of District Consumer Information Centre with the guidance and help of the Monitoring Committee can raise the funds for the centre by receiving donations voluntarily from

- philanthropists
- consumer voluntary organizations
- non-governmental organizations
- consumer activists
- business organizations etc.

by giving proper receipt.

Further the DCIC can establish product testing centers where the services can be charged and funds can be raised.

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Further the DCIC can establish product testing centers where the services can be charged and funds can be raised.

A library shall be set up at the DCIC enrolling members by taking membership fee of Rs.5/- per month so as to raise funds for the centre.

Opening of a Savings Bank Account

The District Supply Officer at district level shall maintain a joint savings bank account with cheque book in any Nationalised Bank or Post Office in the name of District Consumer Information Centre and not in the name of an individual whether by name or by designation. This account may be operated either by the DSO or jointly by the DSO and Information Organizer. The District Supply Officer shall deposit the amounts allotted for District Consumer Information Centre in the account and operate it.

In case of payments below Rs.500/-, it can be made by cash.

In case of payments of more than Rs.500/-, it has to be made by cheque but not by cash.

Utilisation of Funds allotted by State Government / Government of India

1. 50% of the amount from the funds allotted as first installment either by the State Government or Government of India shall be utilized for purchase of computers, furniture, stamp and so on which requires one time investment, as non-recurring expenditure as detailed hereunder at point No.3 with the approval of the Monitoring Committee.
2. The remaining 50% of the amount from the first installment sanctioned may be utilized to meet the expenditure towards registers to maintain accounts, minute's book, consolidated remuneration to the Information Organizer (IO) and Assistant, publicity material to promote the consumer activities, organizing programmes etc as recurring expenditure as detailed hereunder at point No.3.
3. From the second installment onwards, the amount shall be utilized as recurring expenditure with the approval of the Monitoring Committee.
4. The expenditure shall be under the following two Heads:

Recurring

Salaries of Staff
Telephone Bills
Internet Bills
Stationery
Expenditure for conducting National Consumer Day and World Consumer Rights Day
Expenditure for conducting consumer Awareness programmes at least one programme per month
Publishing news letter.

Non-Recurring

Furniture
Telephone connection
Internet connection
Computer
Name boards
Website Development

5. The funds allotted shall not be utilized for any other purpose other than those specified above.
6. In case the funds allotted are utilized for any other purpose other than the programmes and activities of District Consumer Information Centre, the expenditure for the same shall be borne by the District Supply Officer at district level on his own. In case, it comes to the notice of the Department that the District Supply Officer at district level has not utilized the funds for the said purpose, the entire amount shall be recovered from him as a loan with penal interest as decided by the Government from time to time.
7. The funds allotted shall be utilized within 12 months from the date of release of funds. Any portion of the financial assistance / funds which has not been utilized by the District Supply Officer for the purposes or the savings, if any,

from the sanctioned amount shall be refunded to the Department of Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies, Government of Andhra Pradesh within a period of 3 months from the date of completion of the year of receipt of the amount.

- 8. The District Supply Officer shall furnish half yearly reports of utilization of funds sanctioned and released and the details of programmes / activities taken up by the District Consumer Information Centre in the district to the Department of Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies, Government of Andhra Pradesh. Such reports should be made available within a month from the expiry of half year ending September and March, every year.
- 9. The District Supply Officer shall get the accounts of District Consumer Information Centre audited every year by a Chartered Accountant or Government Auditors within 3 months from the closing of the financial year and a copy of such audited accounts shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies & Ex-Officio Secretary, to Government, Consumer Affairs, Food & Civil Supplies Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

MAINTENANCE OF ACCOUNTS

By the District Consumer Information Centre

- 1. The In charge of the District Consumer information Centre shall maintain separate register of accounts
 - a) for the financial assistance received from the State Government / Government of India and its expenditure;
 - b) for the donations received from the Non-Governmental Organisations and Philanthropists and its expenditure;
- 2. Submit utilization certificate every month to the District Supply Officer at the district level.

Role of Consumer Voluntary Organizations in functioning of District Consumer Information Centre

- The Consumer Voluntary Organizations functioning in the district shall liaise with the District Consumer Information Centre in
 - disseminating information on various aspects to the consumers / public
 - educating the people about their rights and responsibilities
 - guiding the consumers / public as to how to file complaints in District Forum, what documents are necessary, what kind of evidence should be added to etc.
 - lobbying with the traders to ensure fair trade practices
 - in providing informative educational material, particularly, for rural / agency area consumers
 - creating awareness about the health and hygiene, environmental concerns and conservation of natural resources.
 - In making efforts to reduce consumer apathy, to encourage them to stand on principals and fight for rights

Sd.- Bhanwar Lal
COMMISSIONER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES.

// ATTESTED //

Neeraja T.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (CA)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, AP.,
HYDERABAD
PRESENT: SRI BHANWAR LAL, I.A.S.,

Proc. No. G2(2)/CPC/3976/2004.

Date:03-02-2006.

Sub: CONSUMER AFFAIRS – Scheme of District Consumer Information Centres – Guidelines on Functioning of District Consumer Information Centres and utilization of Funds – Amendment to the word "In charge" of DCIC – Orders – I s s u e d.

Read: Guidelines on Functioning of District Consumer Information Centres and Utilization of Funds communicated vide Ref. No. G2/CPC/3976/2004, dated 4-6-2005 of Commissioner of Civil Supplies, Hyderabad.

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ORDER:

1. Guidelines on the functioning of District Consumer Information Centres and utilization of Funds were framed and communicated to all concerned vide reference read above. In the said guidelines, it is mentioned that representative of a reputed Consumer Voluntary Organisation in the district shall be kept as "In charge" of the District Consumer Information Centre. Accordingly, the representative of the Consumer Voluntary Organisation who is made responsible for running the Centre is being called as "In charge" of the Centre.

2. During the workshop conducted by the Department, the "In charges of District Consumer Information Centres" in the districts have requested to change their designation from "In charge" to a suitable designation.

3. The request of the In charges of the District Consumer Information Centres in the State is examined and it is decided to change the designation of "In charge" as "Convenor-cum-Advisor".

4. Therefore, the following amendment is hereby issued to the "Guidelines on Functioning of District Consumer Information Centres and Utilization of Funds" framed and communicated vide reference read above:

AMENDMENT

5. "In the Guidelines on Functioning of District Consumer Information Centres and Utilisation of Funds" framed communicated vide Ref. No. G2/CPC/3976/2004, dated 4-6-2005 of Commissioner of Civil Supplies, Hyderabad, wherever the word "Incharge" appears, the word "Convenor-cum-Advisor" is hereby substituted. Henceforth, the word "In charge" in the Guidelines shall be read as "Convenor-cum-Advisor".

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6. All the Joint Collectors, Chief Executive Officers, Zilla Parishads, District Supply Officers, District Public Relations Officers and representatives of Consumer Voluntary Organisations who are looking after the activities of District Consumer Information Centres in the districts are hereby requested to note this amendment and take action accordingly in future.

Sd/- Bhanwar Lal,
COMMISSIONER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES

- To
- All the Joint Collectors in the State.
- All the Chief Executive Officers, Zilla Parishads in the State.
- All the District Supply Officers in the State.
- All the District Public Relations Officers in the State.
- All the Convener-cum-Advisers of District Consumer Information Centres in the State
- Copy to Stock File / Spare.

// ATTESTED //

Neechajw.T
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (CA)