

# Subject- Consumer affairs



***TOPIC- RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CONSUMER  
PROTECTION IN INDIA***

***SUB TOPIC- PRODUCT TESTING, CENTRE FOR CONSUMER  
STUDIES(CCS)***

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# Product Testing



- This the first time that Comparative Testing has been undertaken in South India. It was so far done in Ahmedabad by CERC and in New Delhi by Consumer VOICE both established consumer organizations.
- CONCERT is undertaking to do this for Southern Region for the first time under a grant received from Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India. In the first year, Concert will be testing seven products and three services. We will be testing commonly used consumer products which will include edible vegetable oil, milk, toothpaste, wet grinders, water purifiers, mosquito coils and mats, and pain relief balm. We will also be testing services like banking services, insurance services and mobile services for the first time.

# Organization working on Product Testing



- **CONCERT** a centre for Consumer education, Research, Teaching, Training and **Testing** is a voluntary consumer organization registered as a trust functioning at Chennai. It is a sister organization of Consumers Association of India committed to create awareness among consumers through various workshops, seminars, meetings, media and advocacy programmes. CONCERT is represented on several committees constituted by Government of India and lobbies with the government on issues related to consumers.



- CONCERT is engaged in analyzing consumer products like food items, drugs, petroleum products, in their laboratory. CONCERT has the distinction of setting up the only fuel testing lab outside the industry for testing adulteration in petroleum products. This lab was set up with assistance from the USAID programme and the California Air Resources Board.



- CONCERT is represented in Food and Agriculture division subcommittees of Bureau of Indian Standards New Delhi. Some of the important committees where valuable contribution has been made by CONCERT are:-
  - (i) Drinks and Carbonated Beverages committee
  - (ii) Ready to eat Foods committee
  - (iii) Processed Fruits and vegetables products committee
  - (iv) Packaged Drinking Water etc.,



- CONCERT was one of the committee members which formulated the specification of “QUICK METHODS FOR DETECTION OF ADULTERANTS / CONTAMINANTS IN COMMON FOOD PRODUCTS IS-15642 (Part 1 & 2): 2006. CONCERT has developed a handy kit for testing adulteration in food products called the Annam Spot Testing kit.
- Concert was also represented on Central Advisory Committee of FSSAI Was nominated to the board of BIS for 3 years

# COMPARATIVE PRODUCT TESTING AT VOICE IS A STRINGENT 6 STAGE PROCESS



## STAGE-1 (TEST PROGRAMS)

- 1. DEVELOPMENT OF TEST PROGRAMS**( Drafts of test programs for Comparative Testing are prepared in accordance with the national standards laid down by BIS, FSSAI and other national regulatory authorities. Technical experts of Consumer VOICE explore & gather technical details of the finalized products. Based on the existing standard requirements, test methods, test procedure, test lab, technology, and reference documents are developed.)

## 2. Sent test programs to manufacturers



- Drafts of test programs are sent to all manufacturers and institutions so that they agree to our methodology and do not object when the results are published. Test programs are finalized after consultation with major stakeholders like industrial associations, companies and manufacturers. The comments received are incorporated in test programs suitably to avoid any confusion.



# Stage-2 (PREPARATION FOR TESTING)



- **Lab finalizing-** To ensure that the test results are absolutely accurate and to guarantee confidentiality and accountability, the test laboratories selected for testing are NABL accredited as per International Norms (IS/ISO 17025). Regular contacts are maintained with various labs to know feasibility, test charges and NABL status.
- **Market Survey-** In order to identify major and most selling brands, exploratory research is conducted through various reliable sources like websites, TV, Newspapers, advertisements and retail surveys of Delhi & NCR markets etc. Identified brands and models are then finalized once approved by the Ombudsmen Committee.
- **Ombudsman Committee-** As per the guidelines of Sathi Nair Committee, an Ombudsmen Committee was set up, consisting of representatives from industry and other stakeholders to give approval of brands and testing parameters and also to oversee the process of testing if necessary. As a matter of policy, the approval of the finalized brands and models emerged from the market surveys and test programs, is taken from the Ombudsman Committee.



## Stage-3 (SAMPLE SELECTION AND PREPARATION)



- **Sample purchase-**Samples of products are purchased through the normal retail channels preferably authorized dealers and a cash memo is always obtained with details like serial number, name of purchaser and date etc. It ensures that the company does not deny the authenticity of the sample in case of failure of a sample.
- **Masking and Coding-** To ensure unbiased testing and no compromise of test results, all the samples are masked and coded. The name and logo, model number is masked so that it is not readable. Codes are given as A, B, C etc. and label information is noted down before handing over to the lab staff. .

## STAGE-4 (TESTING AND MONITORING)



- **Samples Sent to Laboratories-** After coding and masking of the products, samples are sent to testing locations located at various cities. Great care is taken in the transportation to ensure that samples are not spoiled, destroyed or damaged.
- **Lab Testing and Monitoring-** Consumer VOICE's technical team maintains regular contacts with laboratories to monitor the testing to ensure that correct methodology and schedule is adhered to. Regular visits to the laboratories are required to minimize the discrepancies.

# STAGE-5 (RESULTS AND REVIEWS)



- **Test Result Grading and Rating**-The performance on each parameter is compared with standard requirements and also converted into a consolidated comparative chart showing scores against each parameter and overall score of brands.
- **Lab report Evaluation**-The detailed test report as received from Laboratory is evaluated and analyzed by the experts to ensure that all parameters which were agreed upon have been tested.

## STAGE-6 (TEST REPORTS DISSEMINATION)



- **Send results to Manufacturers-**As per policy on transparency and giving opportunity to manufacturers, test results are sent to individual manufacturers for their comments. The suggestions received from the manufacturers are taken care before evaluation and publishing of the test reports. Since, the tests are performed by following strict standards; there are few chances of retest. If at all the need of retest arises, it is conducted immediately.
- **Publish Test Reports-** To make the technical reports more reader friendly, our Editorial Team rewrites the technical reports. The key findings and value for money with recommendations are highlighted and converted into a reader friendly language in our Consumer VOICE Magazine (English and Hindi) and Product Reviews section on our website.



- For further information about consumer VOICE organization you can visit the website as given below link:-
  - <https://www.consumer-voice.org/>
- For further information about Centre for Consumer Studies(CCS) you can visit the website as given below link:-
  - <http://www.consumereducation.in/#TOP>

# Centre for Consumer Studies(CCS)



- **Centre for Consumer Studies, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi**
- The Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi has been working in partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs, GoI since 1992, in the quest for realizing policy objectives, through training programmes, research studies, seminars, publications and consultancy assignment. To give boost to the efforts of the Government in the area of consumer protection and consumer welfare the need of a dedicated “Centre of Excellence” for the cause of Consumers” rights and interests” protection and promotion was felt at the Government level. It was further realized that the involvement and convergence of various stakeholders particularly the institutions working at the local level in the area of consumer protection will certainly prove to be beneficial in furtherance of the policy objectives of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

# Centre for Consumer Studies(CCS)cont..



- The Centre seeks to network, with national and international agencies and interface with other stakeholders by serving as a bridging “think tank”, with an intensive advocacy role. It acts as a forum for creating dialogue among policy-makers, serviceproviders, representatives of various business establishments and their associations, professional bodies/associations, civil society organizations, educational/research institutions, economic and social development organizations as well as leading NGOs. It also acts as a storing and clearing-house for the exchange and constant flow of information, ideas and activities relating to consumer protection and welfare. The Centre closely works in association with the DCA, GoI, National/State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions and District Forums.



# Centre for Consumer Studies(CCS) cont..



- The CCS is envisaged as a Centre functioning with flexibility and openness. Its broad areas of focus comprise of the following:
  1. Advocacy, Policy Analysis and Research
  2. Advisory and Consultative Services
  3. Capacity Building, and
  4. Networking and Information Exchange

# The objectives of the Centre are



- Conduct / facilitate in-depth action research in the area of consumer protection and consumer welfare;
- Organize and help other organizations in training of personnel engaged in administration and adjudication of consumer justice in the country;
- Network with the other institutions/ organisations, nationally and internationally, working for the cause of consumer rights protection;
- Organise seminars/ workshops/ conferences/ round tables on the contemporary issues relating to consumer protection;

# The objectives of the Centre are



- Sensitise trade and industry and the service providers to the requirements of the consumers, especially to alternative and informal mechanisms to resolve their complaints and redress their grievances;
- Create resource centre for future research and publish books/ monographs/ occasional papers to fill up existing knowledge gap; and
- Provide policy inputs to the Department of Consumer Affairs from time to time.



Thank you