



Core centre
Consumer Online Resource & Empowerment Centre

Monthly Report, For May 2006

**Consumer Online Resource and Empowerment
(CORE) Project**

Supported by

**The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public
Distribution, Govt. of India**

And

Managed by
Consumer Coordination Council (CCC)



**Chairman, CCC
Prof. Durai Singham,**



Highlights

- ✓ Over 38 Lac hits received till date from 50 countries across the globe to www.core.nic.in
 - ✓ Over 13 Lac Requests
 - ✓ Over 2 Lac visits
 - ✓ In May 2006, the figures are 352,113 hits, 111,111 requests, 17684 visits respectively
 - ✓ Top 10 most popular Search Engines are able to identify key words relating to CORE Centre
 - ✓ 3700 Subscribers of CORE Centre E-Newsletter
-
- ✓ Over 13 Thousand Complaints received from 15th March 2005 to 31st May 2006 from all parts of India as also from abroad
 - ✓ 1225 Complaints received in May 2006
 - ✓ Total 1950 complaints (14.4% of all complaints handled) were resolved by CORE Centre from 15th March 2005 to 31st May 2006



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Preface

About CCC

Consumer Coordination Council (CCC) is a National Coalition of over 57 Leading Consumer Organizations in the country, working on issues relating to consumer interests as well as on various government policies affecting consumers and other related matters. CCC is also an Affiliate Member of Consumers' International (CI) U.K. As a non-profit and issue based National Coalition of Consumer Organizations, it provides a common platform for Consumer Organizations working in the area of diverse consumer issues. CCC is registered under the Societies Registration Act, as also under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). CCC has by now completed over a decade of service to Consumers in general and Member Consumer Organisations in particular.

Vision:

Consumer Sovereignty.

Mission:

To be an effective National Coalition of consumer protection groups so as to provide thrust to common issues affecting consumers.

Aims & Objectives:

- Influencing policies, legislation and administrative framework towards promoting consumer interests.
- Empowering consumer protection groups to work towards a responsible constructive movement.

Consumer Online Resource & Empowerment (CORE) Centre Project:

In the background of what has been stated above and the emerging vibrant Information Technology, CCC proposed to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (M/o C.A., F&PD) a Project for Web Based Institutional Approach to Consumer Awareness & Protection to be called Consumer Online Resource & Empowerment Centre, briefly CORE Centre. CCC is happy to acknowledge and record the highly proactive approach by the present team of Senior Officials of the M/o C.A., F&PD for their positive response, in coming forward to approve and sanction CCC's CORE Centre Project Proposal. In fact the proposal was initiated by



CCC in October 2004 and was approved and sanctioned by the Ministry after a few rounds of presentation in record time by February 2005.

The CORE Centre was located in the premises of the National Institute of Training for Standardization of BIS, Sector-62, NOIDA, in February itself and was inaugurated on 15th March 2005 — **World Consumer Rights Day** — by Shri Sharad Pawar, Hon'ble Minister for M/o C.A., F&PD. A formal CCC with the Ministry has also entered into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 30th June 2005, incorporating the Terms & Conditions under which the project will be supported by the Ministry and managed by CCC. In the meanwhile, two other initiatives taken by the Ministry towards Consumer Awareness & Protection viz. the National Consumer Helpline Project & the Consumer VOICE Project, were also integrated with CORE Centre project for an Integrated Publicity & Promotion Policy through a joint MOU between the three Projects.

Details of the CORE Project:

The various Components of the CORE Project are: -

- (i) National Resource Centre;
- (ii) Online Database / Portal;
- (iii) Newsletter Service;
- (iv) Network between Consumer Organisations, Consumer Information Centres, Government & Non-Government Organisations;
- (v) Online Complaint Registration & Mediation Mechanism.

The main Objectives of the CORE Centre Project are: -

- (i) Development of National Information gathering mechanisms on consumer related issues;
- (ii) Dissemination of information on important consumer issues;
- (iii) Establishing a Research & Documentation Centre (highlighting the work of partner members) on various consumer issues;
- (iv) Providing information and analysis of consumer related Laws & Judgments;
- (v) To provide Online Support and pursue Consumer Complaints;
- (vi) Raise Resources to become Self Supporting at the end of five years.



PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR GENERATING REVENUE FOR CORE PROJECT AND TO MAKE IT SELF RELIANT

Paragraphs 8 & 9 of the MOU entered into by CCC with the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution read as follows: -

- “8. The Second Party shall make every effort to make the project self supporting to the maximum extent within the project period of 5-years and in any case ensure that the project becomes fully self supporting commencing from the 6th year, by generating sufficient revenue on its own from the project.
9. The Second Party shall report regularly to the First Party about the status of progressive self-reliance of the CORE Centre.”

CORE Project has completed 12 months since its inauguration on 15th March 2005. As such the project is still in its early stages of implementations and has not reached its full potential. The process of migrating the CORE Website and its database from a private server where these are presently located to the NIC Server is still in progress. Substantial improvement to the CORE Website will be undertaken thereafter. Necessary additional software will be acquired to make the Website more effective.

We have only four **subscribers** to CORE Centre who have registered themselves by paying an Annual Subscription of Rs.2200 for accessing our Website. Ways and means of increasing the numbers are under examination.

The following are some tentative proposals under consideration for raising revenue for the project: –

- Holding of discussions with the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs to enable the CORE Website to act as a Resource Centre and Database for the National Commission for accessing of Legal Information & Judgments. Initiative in this regard will be taken after transfer to the NIC Server is completed. Suitable financial arrangement in this regard will also be worked out thereafter.
- Similar proposals for linking the State Commissions and the District Fora will also be considered. However, with NCDRC's decision to publish landmark judgments with State Commissions to follow suit, likelihood of attracting more subscribers is diminishing.
- The current subscription rate of Rs.2200 per annum is being reviewed to see how this can be rationalized and differential rates fixed, for various stages of accessibility of Information on the Website.
- Though currently the Weekly/Fortnightly/Monthly/Quarterly Newsletters are accessible free of cost, possibility of making selected links available to members or on payment of subscription is also being examined.
- Presently, complaints are being handling free of cost. However, the rate of resolving of complaints is not sufficiently encouraging and those whose complaints are not resolved are advised to take the case to Consumer Forum. Holding face-to-face meetings with service providers/ manufacturers to improve the results before the last step of filing complaints in consumer forum is taken is on the anvil. Two State Governments, viz Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu have been approached to translate selected portions of the website with a view to improving our outreach and provide facility for filing complaints



in these languages on pilot basis. We have also written to Ministry for help in getting the website and selected links into Hindi.

- MOU has been entered into with a Technology firm to automate and improve the process of handling complaints and exploring avenues for raising revenues to make the project self sustainable.
- Possibility of providing Consultancy Services, for generating data and for research on various consumer issues, is also proposed to be explored.
- These initiatives are expected to lead to successful launch of levying a handling fee as well.



Online Registration & Redressal of Complaints is one of the major day-to-day activities of the CORE Centre.

The procedure followed, in dealing with Complaints Registered on the Website directly and received by email, as also written complaints, mostly forwarded by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs & other sources, is known to the Ministry. A few changes have been made as follows:

Stage # 1: Acknowledgement is sent immediately to the Complainant and the complaints are sorted according to sectors, such as services, white goods etc. and sent to designate Complaint Managers.

Stage # 2: If the Grievance/Complaint is still not redressed, a final letter was being written to the Opposite Party, mentioning that their name will be included in a *List* titled "Beware of such Organisations", maintained by the CORE Centre and posted on the Website. ***However, it was noticed that often the same respondent would act favourably in some cases while others met a different fate. It has now been decided to work out a formulation in consultation with Voice Society and NCH, with whom we have an MOU, to work out a more rational system.***



Online Database/Portal:

MONTHLY SUMMARY OF HITS, VISITS, REQUESTS etc. TO THE CORE CENTRE

Cumulative Number of Hits, Visits, Requests Etc. to the CORE Centre from 15th March 2005 to 31st May 2006.

1.	Total Number of Hits	38,93,356
2.	Total Number of Requests	13,23,872
3.	Total Number of Visits	2,32,988
4.	Average No. Requests per visit	5:68
5.	Average Visit Duration (in Minutes)	00:06:01

Highest Number of Hits, Visits, Requests Etc. to the CORE Centre is in the Month of December'05

1.	Hits	373,580
2.	Requests	118,619
3.	Visits	16,562
4.	Average No. Requests per visit	7:61
5.	Average Visit Duration (in Minutes)	00:05:01

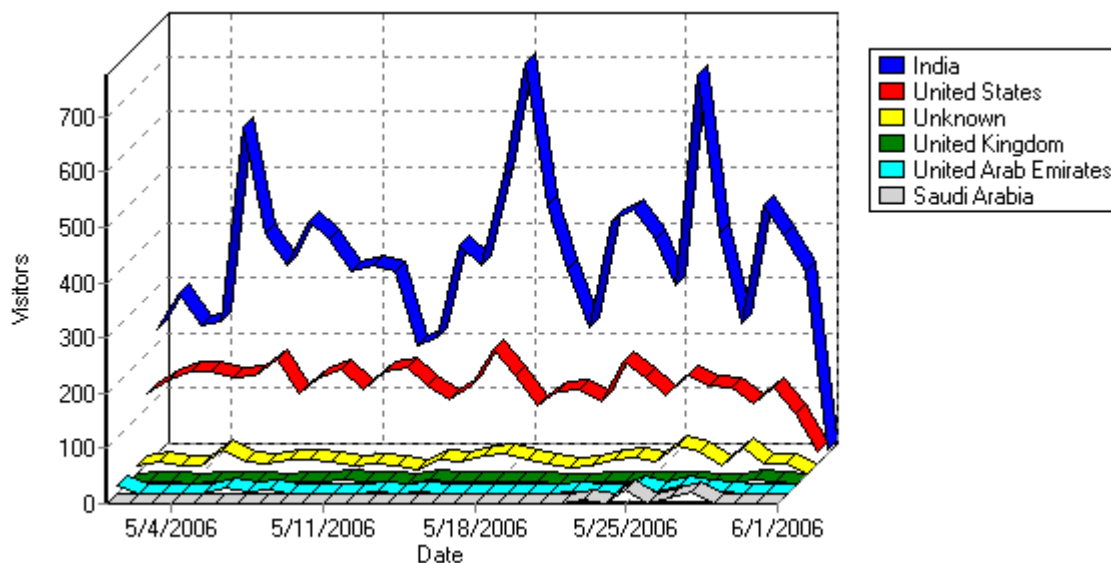
Last Two months comparison of Hits, Visits, Requests Etc. to the CORE Centre

		April 06	May 06
1.	Hits	291,560	352,113
2.	Requests	82,398	111,111
3.	Visits	16,008	17,684
4.	Average No. Requests per visit	5:14	6:29
5.	Average Visit Duration (in Minutes)	00:05:42	00:06:01

NOTE: **Hit:** Any connection to the Website;
Request: Any hit that successfully retrieves contents;
Visit: Series of consecutive requests from a user;
Visit Length: Time between first & last request of a visit.



Daily Countries Activity
Figure1



Figures 1 show interesting statistics regarding the countries from which access were made to the CORE Centre website. Since as many as 50 countries are listed, it can be inferred that the CORE Centre website is becoming popular. Incidentally there are substantial visits from the United States.

Top Search Engines
Table 1

	Search Engine	Searches
1	Google	1,659
2	Yahoo	118
3	MSN	66
4	AskJeeves	11
5	Netscape	2
6	Seznam	1
7	Search.com	1
8	AOL	1
9	Altavista	1
10	Lycos	1
	Total	1,861

Table 1 show that most popular Search Engines are able to identify key words relating to CORE Centre website & enable visitors to access it easily. This we consider as a measure of the visibility & popularity of the CORE Centre website.



National Resource Centre:

Present Status of the CORE Centre Website

Major Links provided in the CORE Centre Website are the following:

- ◆ Core Achievements
- ◆ Reports & Surveys
- ◆ CCC's Member Activities
- ◆ Consumer Focus
- ◆ Campaigns
- ◆ Consumer Judgments
- ◆ About CCC
- ◆ Test Reports
- ◆ Acts and Rules
- ◆ Frequently Asked Questions
- ◆ Articles
- ◆ Standards
- ◆ Press Releases
- ◆ News Desk
- ◆ File a Complaint
- ◆ Discussion Desk
- ◆ Advocacy Campaign
- ◆ Consumer Events
- ◆ Sites of Interest
- ◆ Core Centre Status
- ◆ Publications
- ◆ 4NC of CCC
- ◆ MOU
- ◆ Consumer Alerts

Other Major Links are:

- ◆ State and District Wise Names and Addresses of the Consumer Forums
- ◆ State and District Wise Names and Addresses of the Consumer Courts
- ◆ State and District Wise Names and Addresses of the Consumer Organizations

However the website is being reviewed to bring about some corrections, reorganizing links and making it more attractive.

A new feature added is that of receiving queries online and providing response within a specified time limit. It is observed that large numbers of queries are being received every day. This will also help us to add to the list of FAQs and add links in respect of areas of more common complaints.

New Contents (Pages) added in May 2006

CORE Status:	45 Pages
Consumer Alert:	04 Pages
List of District Forums	53 pages



Newsletter Service:

Currently the Weekly/Fortnightly/Monthly/Quarterly Newsletters are accessible free of cost in CORE Centre. The list of Newsletters is uploaded onto the CORE Website, in the following link <http://www.corecentre.org/guest/newsletter/> . At present **3700** subscribers are registered themselves for accessing CORE Centre E-newsletter. May 2006 issues of E-newsletters are enclosed as **Annexure – 1**.



Online Complaint Registration & Mediation Mechanism

In the month of May 2006, 1225 Complaints were received from various corners of the country, as against 1231 for the month of April 2006.

Figure-2 shows the comparative picture of complaints received by CORE Centre from 15th March 2005 to 31st May 2006. As will be seen there from, though there has been a steady increase in the number of complaints received from 15th March 2005 onwards, there are small variations in the numbers in between the months. This reflects the impact of advertisements being issued by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.

Comparative analysis of the complaints received from 15th March 2005 to 31st May 2006.

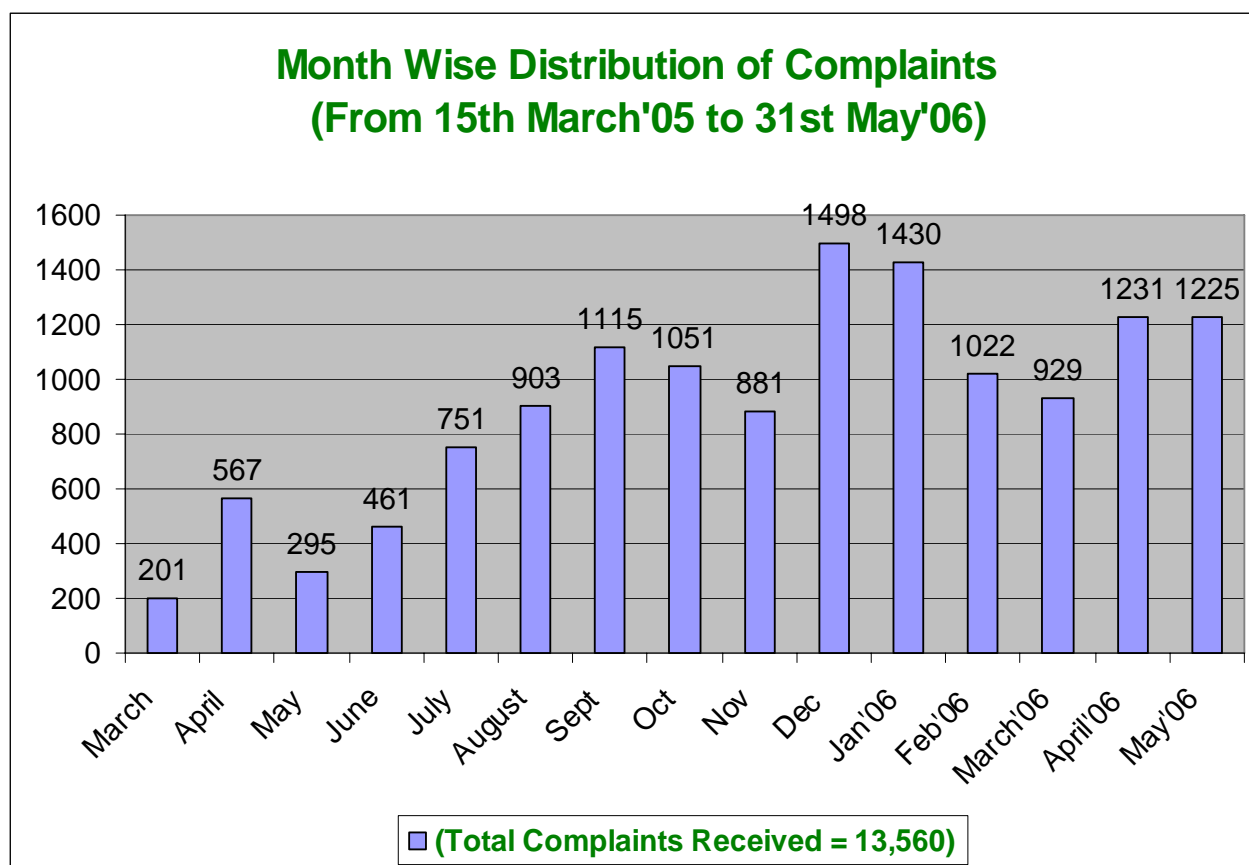


Figure-2

State wise breakup of Complaints

Total Complaints Received in May 2006 – 1225

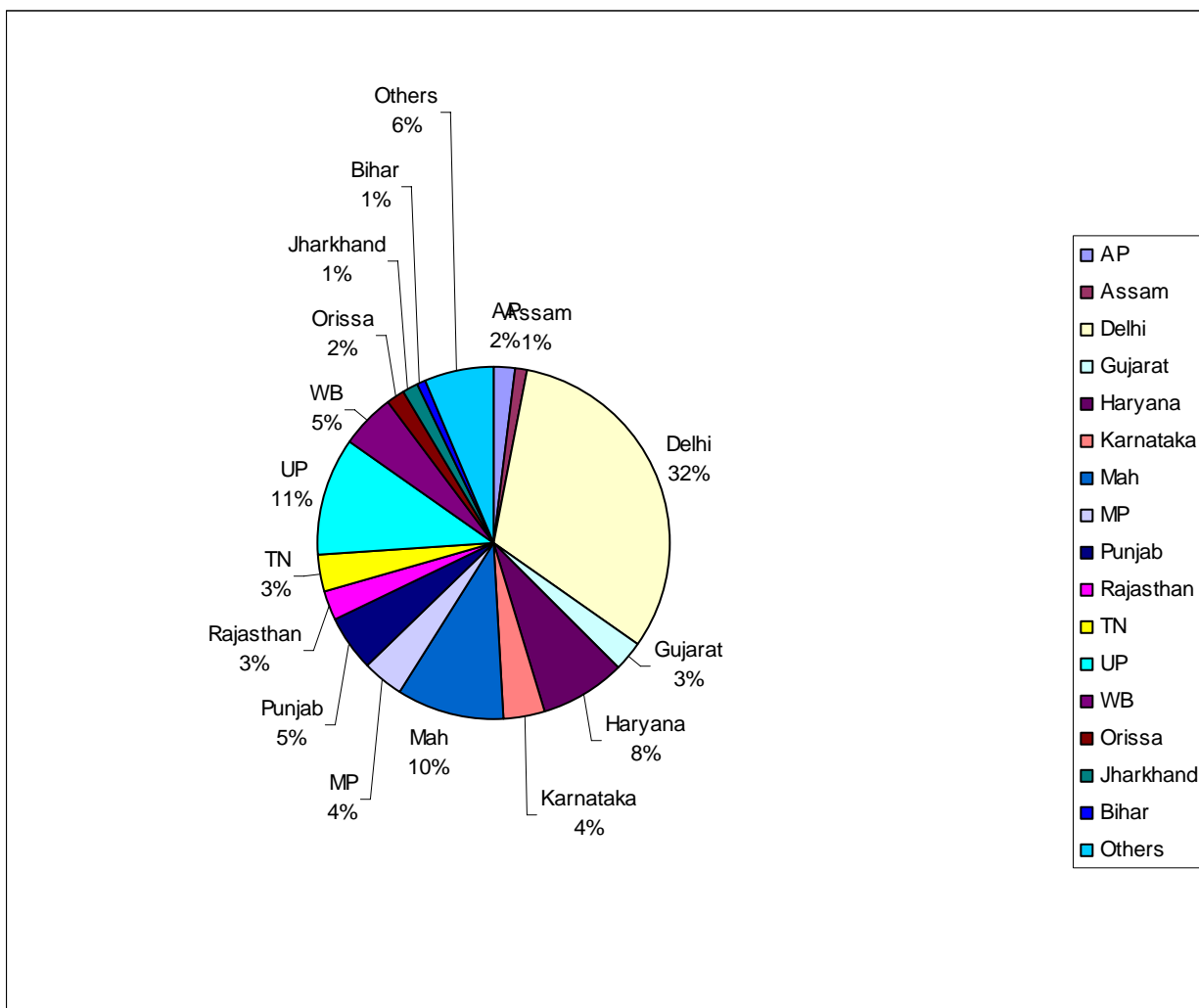


Figure-3



Analysis of Complaints remaining unresolved as on 1st June 2006

Table 2

S. No.	Details	Numbers
1.	Total no. of complaint received from 15 th March 2005 to 31 st May 2006	13560
2.	Total No. of complaints resolved till 31 st May 2006	1950
3.	Balance no. of complaints remaining unresolved as on 1 st June 2006	11610

Table 3 shows Stage wise analysis of complaints remaining unresolved as on 1st June 2006.

S. No.	Stages	Numbers
1.	Unresolved complaints which are more than 45 days old (These are complaints received from 15 th March to 15 th March 2006 on which Stage 3 action has already been taken, as on 1 st June 2006, but no response has been received from the opposite party)	9902
2.	Unresolved complaints which are between 31 to 45 days old (These are complaints received from 16 th April 2006 to 30 th April 2006 on which Stage 3 action has already been taken, as on 1 st June 2006, and response is awaited)	553
3.	Unresolved complaints which are between 16 to 30 days old (These are complaints received from 1 st May 2006 to 15 th May 2006 on which Stage 2 action has already been taken, as on 1 st June 2006, but are still remaining unresolved)	538
4.	Unresolved complaints which are between 1 to 15 days old (These are complaints received from 16 th May 2006 to 31 st May 2006 on which Stage 1 action has already been taken, as on 1 st June 2006, but are still remaining unresolved)	617
Total Unresolved Complaints as on 1st June 2006		11610

Table 3

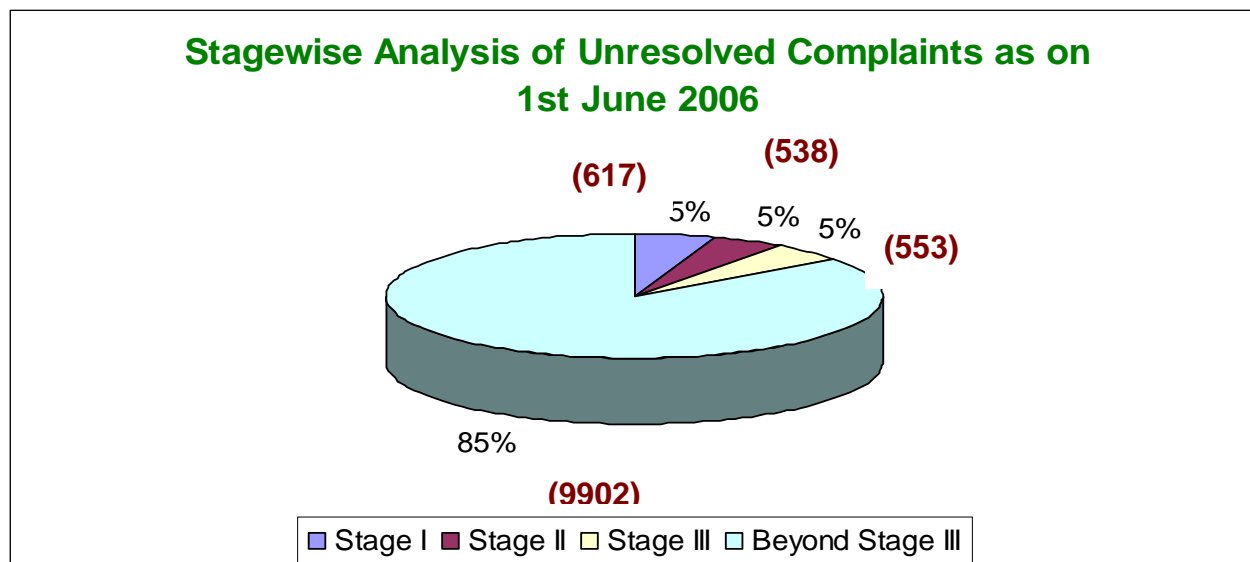


Figure-4



SUBJECT WISE BREAK UP OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints received in the CORE center can be categorized into following major heads for analytical purpose:

- Services
- Products
- Banking
- Telecom
- Miscellaneous

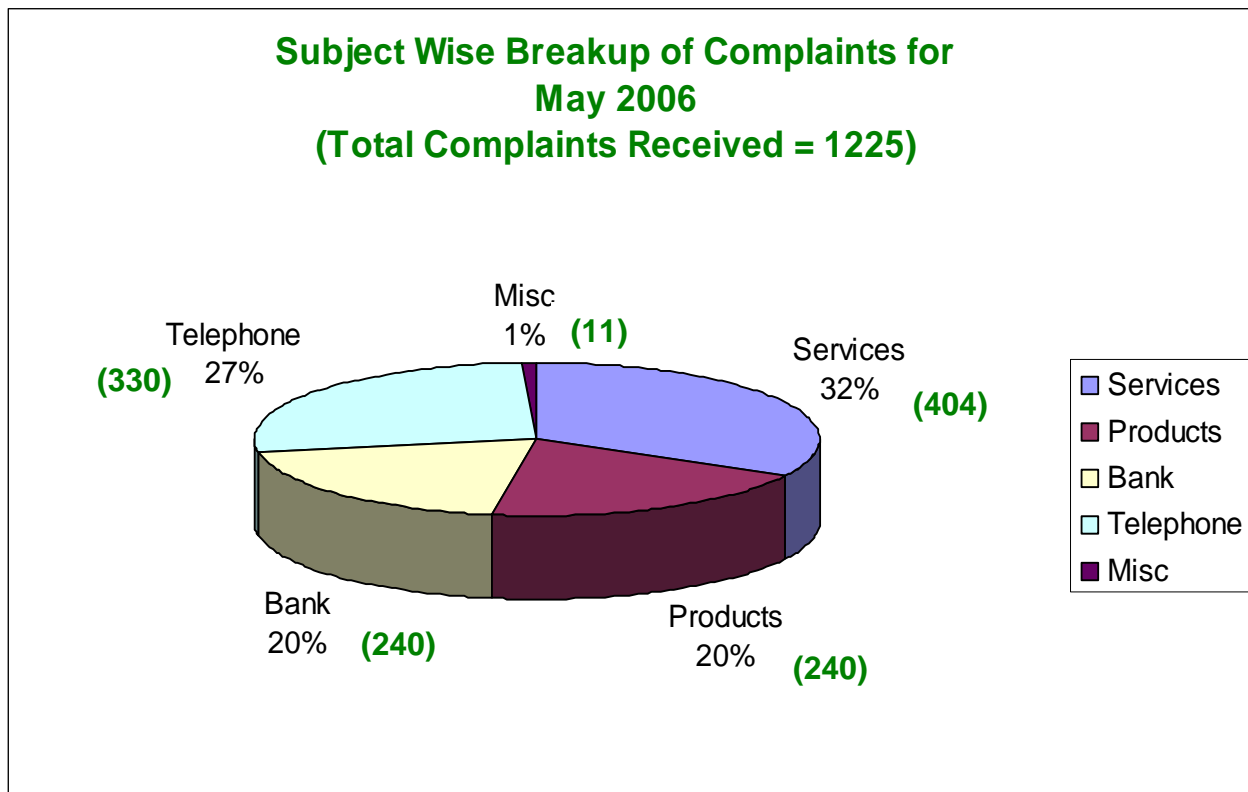


Figure-5

As can be seen from Figures 5, highest percentage of complaints is from the Services & Telecom category.

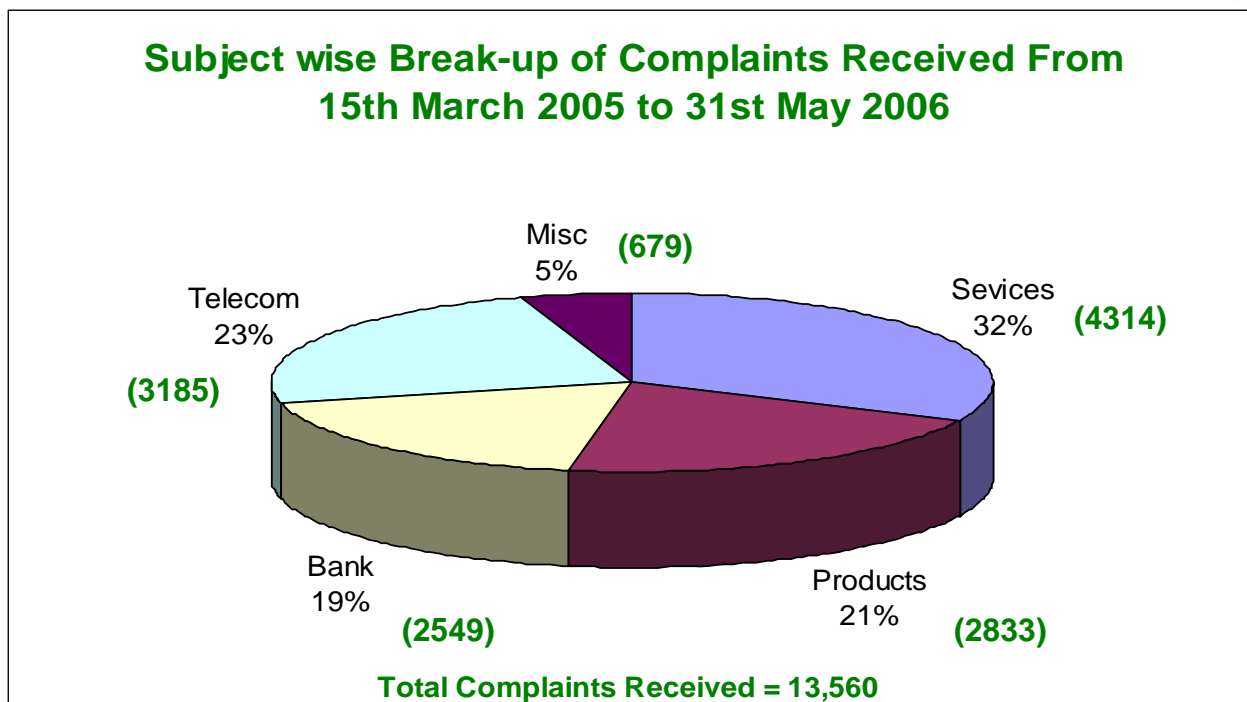


Figure-6

Figure 6 shows the Subject wise breakup of the total complaints received from 15th March 2005 to 31st May 2006

CORE Staff Strength

The total staff strength, as on 31st May 2006 is 9. This consist of seven Managers handling complaints, a Program Executive handling Contents of the CORE Centre Website and compiling the Consumer Network Magazine, a Manager Technical who takes care of the Technical expertise & ensures that the work runs smoothly.

Besides these, there is a Director, Jt. Director, Accounts/Administrative Officer, an Accountant, A Computer Executive, Office assistance, a Caretaker, a Driver and a part time cleaner.

OUR REWARDS

We have received a number of appreciation letters from the consumers, whose grievances have been resolved amicably through Consumer Online Resource and Empowerment (CORE) Centre, as also from those whose redressal is in process, for taking prompt action on their complaints. The opposite parties have also been responding positively and promising further support in resolving complaints referred to them by us. Such responses have encouraged us in our efforts. We consider this as our reward for our efforts.



**Meetings Attended by Senior Officials of
CORE Centre and Office bearers of CCC in May 2006**

Sl. No.	Organization	Subject of Meeting	Date	Place	Attended by
1	Vice Minister & Director, M/o Consumer Affairs, MINCIN, CUBA	Presentation on CORE Centre	May 9, 2006	BIS (NITS Complex)	Director, CCC
2	Head-Service (Cards), Standard Chartered Bank	Discussions, how to speedily Redressal of Consumer Complaints	May 23, 2006	CCC-CORE Centre	Director, CCC
3	NCH Officials & Students of Institute of Home Economics, Delhi University	To know about CCC-CORE Centre activities	May 30, 2006	CCC-CORE Centre	Director, CCC
4	District Magistrates	Presentation on CORE Centre	May 25-26, 2006	BIS (NITS) Complex	Director, CCC
5	M/o Consumer Affairs	Official Meeting		Ministry of Consumer Affairs	Director, CCC
6	NIC	Migration of Website and for seeking Technical Guidance	May 16, 2006	NIC	Director, CCC

ANNEXURE -1

(Electronic Newsletter of May 2006)

Core Centre

Consumer Online Resource & Empowerment Centre

Vol : 20, May 2006

Your E-Newsletter

Dear CORE User,

Welcome to the CORE CENTRE E-Newsletter. Through these newsletters you can receive all the latest, relevant and up to date consumer news, events, articles and judgments. You can click on the links in the newsletter to access this information. For more information you can visit our website at www.core.nic.in.

Happy Reading.

CONSUMER FOCUS ↓



Pan Masala and Gutkas- Could Harm You?

It is not known to many consumers that the ubiquitous Pan Masala available throughout India is very dangerous to their health. It is further not known that a form of Pan Masalas called 'Gutkas' is a far greater health hazard than filtered cigarettes as the concentration of tobacco is 24% to 30% higher. The threats to consumers health are many. Read More>>>

- ▶ [Killers in Pouches - Why Pan Masalas and Gutkas are harmful?](#)
- ▶ [Government Policies: Pan Masala has been made Cheaper?](#)
- ▶ [India looses 31,000 Crores yearly due to tobacco related diseases](#)
- ▶ [All that a Pan Masala Pouch does not say](#)

CONSUMER NEWS ↓

▶ [Ban On Smoking Scenes To Be Deferred Till July 31](#) (Sunday, April 30, 2006)

The Delhi High Court deferred the imposition of ban on smoking scenes, except in the old films and television programmes as notified earlier, till July 31.

▶ [PIL Seeks Direction To Provide Hygienic Food For Passengers](#) (Saturday, April 29, 2006)

A PIL has been filed before the Delhi High Court seeking direction to the Ministry of Railways to modernise and sanitize their base kitchens, which supply the food for the passengers on the running trains.

▶ [Liquor Shops: SC Reprimands Chhattisgarh Govt](#) (Wednesday, April 26, 2006)

The Supreme Court has severely reprimanded the state of Chhattisgarh and its officers for flouting its directions in the matter of granting of excise licenses for liquor shops in the State.

▶ [Close Down Unlicensed Drug, Chemist Shops: J&K HC](#) (Tuesday, April 25, 2006)

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed the state government to close down private hospitals, nursing homes and chemist shops operating without proper registration and license.

[Bar Council: Lawyers to Adieu To 'my Lord,' and 'your Lordship'](#) (Monday, April 17, 2006)

A notice is on the way to the Gazette, the publication of which will make such forms of address in Indian courts as 'My Lord' or 'Your Lordship' history, the Bar Council of India announced today.

PREVIOUS ISSUES



With summer, power cuts have become the norm in most cities in India. Power bills have also become dearer. The growing Indian middle class and a westernised lifestyle has resulted in the increased use of energy to run new-age machines and electrical gadgets. It is estimated that electronic gadgets on a standby mode in Delhi itself costs consumers over rupees 600 crores annually. Consumers by taking effective steps can not only reduce the excessive reliance of energy but could also reduce their monthly energy bills. The [previous CORE e-newsletter](#) focused on losses caused to consumers due to electronic gadgets on standby mode.

CORE CENTRE ACHIEVEMENTS

[See the achievements of the CORE Centre in complaint handling and management.](#)

[Report for the Month of March 2006](#)

CONSUMER NOTIFICATIONS & CIRCULARS

[G.S.R. 259](#) (E) (28/04/2006)

Ban on Advertisement of Tobacco Products further postponed to 1st August, 2006.

[S.O. 549](#) (E) (18/04/2006)

Corrigendum

[S.O. 526](#) (E) (12/04/2006)

Draft Rules to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945

CONSUMER ACTS

[Prevention of Food Adulteration \(Second Amendment\) Rules, 2006](#)

[Telecommunication Interconnection Usage Charges \(Sixth Amendment\) Regulation \(1 of 2006\)](#)

CONSUMER JUDGMENTS

[Haryana State Electricity Board v Mam Chand](#) 28/04/2006 (SUPREME COURT OF INDIA)

Consumer Protection Act, 1986; Electricity Act, 2003- Scope and extent of the beneficial consumer jurisdiction. Issue - Is the consumer entitled to the beneficial jurisdiction extendable to assessment and quantification of duty (including penalty) under the Electricity Act, 2003. Matter remanded to the State Commission to hear afresh.

Your E-Newsletter

Dear CORE User,

Welcome to the CORE CENTRE E-Newsletter. Through these newsletters you can receive all the latest, relevant and up to date consumer news, events, articles and judgments. You can click on the links in the newsletter to access this information. For more information you can visit our website at www.core.nic.in.

Happy Reading.

CONSUMER FOCUS ↓



Consumer Complaints Highest Against Telecom Companies

Most grievances recorded in the years 2005 and 2006 relate to complaints by telephone users and more particularly mobile users. A review of the complaints received by the Consumer Online Foundation, the National Consumer Helpline and CORE indicated that most telecom customers were very upset about the poor quality of services offered, misrepresentation and improper billing practice adopted by telecom companies in India. Read More >>>

- ▶ [Dilemma of Liberalisation in the Telecom Sector- More Choices, More Complaints](#)
- ▶ [Nature of the Complaints Against Mobile Companies](#)
- ▶ [Review of TRAI Directives in Favour of Consumer](#)

CONSUMER NEWS ↓

▶ [Committee For Monitoring Tv Channels](#) (Thursday, May 11, 2006)

The Government has constituted a Committee on 03.10.2005 to review the Programme Code and Advertising Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995

▶ [MRTPC Directs Mahyco Monsanto Biotech-india Ltd To Fix Reasonable Trait Value For BT](#)

▶ [Cotton Seed](#) (Thursday, May 11, 2006)

The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) pronounced an order on 11th May, 2006 on the application for temporary injunction moved by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

▶ [Press Note - Price Spectrum Band For Plantation Crops Under Price Stabilisation Fund](#)

▶ [Scheme Announced](#) (Wednesday, May 10, 2006)

The Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) Trust, Department of Commerce, Government of India, has



announced the Price Spectrum Band for the year 2005 for Rubber, Coffee and Tea.

[India To Deepen Reforms Process To Achieve Millennium Development Goals By 2015](#)

(Saturday, May 06, 2006)

Speaking at the Business Session of the ADB's 39th Annual Meeting here today, the Union Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram, who is Chairman of the Board of Governors and Governor for India, said, "The multiplier effect of ADB's assistance through a Public Private Partnership model would be much higher than the current approach of reliance mostly on public infrastructure projects."

[HC Directs Appearance of AIIMS Medical Superintendent](#) (Thursday, May 04, 2006)

The Delhi High Court requested the Medical Superintendent of the AIIMS to appear before it on May 11 to reply to the queries on the petition of a minor child, who had been allegedly afflicted with HIV-positive during blood transfusion in the hospital.



PREVIOUS ISSUES ↓

It is not known to many consumers that the ubiquitous Pan Masala available throughout India is very dangerous to their health. It is further not known that a form of Pan Masalas called 'Gutkas' is a far greater health hazard than filtered cigarettes as the concentration of tobacco is 24% to 30% higher. The threats to consumers health are many. [The previous CORE e-newsletter](#) focused on harm caused by Pan Masalas and 'Gutkas'.

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[See the achievements of the CORE Centre in complaint handling and management.](#)

[Report for the Month of April 2006](#)

CONSUMER NOTIFICATIONS & CIRCULARS ↓

[17\(66\)/2006-Div.III/NPPA](#) (E) (03/05/2006)

Fixes / revises maximum sale price of scheduled bulk drugs and also retail price and ceiling prices

[S.O. 624 \(E\)](#) (E) (28/04/2006)

Corrigendum to NPPA Order S.O.418(E), dated 27-03-2006.

[G.S.R. 259](#) (E) (28/04/2006)

Ban on Advertisement of Tobacco Products further postponed to 1st August, 2006.

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