

More than 30% of cases in Bihar’s state and district consumer commissions are pending, reveals IJR’s Consumer Justice Report 2026

18 March, Patna: A first-of-its-kind study, the *Consumer Justice Report 2026: Assessing Capacity of Redressal Commissions in India*, by the India Justice Report (IJR) released today, ranks Bihar 13th among the 19 Large and Mid-sized states (with populations of over one crore each) with the top spot taken by Andhra Pradesh followed by Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan. Jharkhand and Telangana were ranked 18th and 19th respectively.

Some encouraging trends:

- In 2025, the Bihar State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (SCDRC) had filled both the president and staff member posts.
- All 38 districts of Bihar had a district commission each as per the mandate of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Where improvements can be made:

- Both the president and member vacancy at the DCDRC level was more than 50%.
- The SCDRC and District Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (DCDRCs) had disposed only 69% of the cases (2020-2024)
- Bihar did not provide data on women’s share in the SCDRC – president, member, or staff.

Among the nine small states (with populations less than one crore each), Meghalaya ranked first, followed by Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh.

Drawing primarily on public data obtained through Right to Information inquiries and parliamentary responses, the study evaluates state performance through the filters of budgets, infrastructure, human resources, workload and diversity to rank how well states have equipped themselves to fulfill the statutory obligations under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Consumer Commissions Jurisdictions

Based on the 2021 rules¹, each tier has a pecuniary jurisdiction to entertain complaints of a specified monetary value.

- DCDRCs - jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed 50 lakh rupees.
- SCDRCs - jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration exceeds 50 lakh rupees but does not exceed 2 crore rupees.

¹ The Consumer Protection (Jurisdiction of the District Commission, the State Commission and the National Commission) Rules, 2021. Available at: https://consumeraffairs.gov.in/public/upload/files/232278_1732705181.pdf

- National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) - jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration exceeds 2 crore rupees.

Cases pending for more than three years

Section 38(7) of the Consumer Protection Act 2019 stipulates every complaint to be disposed of as “*expeditiously as possible within a period of three months from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities and within five months if it requires analysis or testing of commodities.*” Although the Bihar SCDRC did not provide data on three year case pendency, the Patna DCDRC reported more than 60% cases were pending for more than three years in 2025.

Sectoral Analysis of Consumer Cases

Analysis of cases filed and disposed between 2010 and 2024 (15 years) as available on the official portal Confonet² (now e-jagriti) by IJR reveals that:

1. There were over 4,300 cases filed with the Bihar SCDRC. Only 40% of the cases filed had been cleared.
2. 44% of cases filed with the SCDRC were in the insurance sector followed by banking (20%) and electricity (8%) sectors.
3. 68% of disposed cases took more than 365 days. On average, Bihar’s SCDRC disposed of cases in 965 days, which is nearly six times the maximum time period (five months) mandated in the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
4. During the 15-year period, disposed cases took 13 hearings, on average, to be cleared.

IJR’s consumer dashboard can be accessed here: <https://ccdash.indiajusticereport.org/>

Staff in SCDRC

As of 2025, the state commission had a president and all four of the sanctioned members. Bihar did not provide data for the composition of the commission’s president and members for the period between 2021 and 2024.

The presence of adequate staff strength is essential to the smooth functioning of an SCDRC. The Bagla Committee Report in 2000 recommended a total of 38 staff positions including 10 peons in a SCDRC. It also said that for every 250 pending cases there should be a 1 assistant and 1 LDC, thereby

² CONFONET was an Online Case Management System administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs to digitise the functioning of the consumer commissions across India, enabling end-to-end digital tracking from case filing to judgment at the district, state, and national levels. To modernise this framework, CONFONET 2.0 was introduced in December 2023. Subsequently, CONFONET has been subsumed into e-Jagriti, launched on 1 January 2025 as a unified platform that integrates CONFONET with other legacy systems to deliver a seamless, citizen-centric ecosystem for faster and transparent consumer justice. It allows advocates to manage cases and hearings, while providing judges secure access to end-to-end digital case files, analytics, and virtual courtrooms to facilitate faster, infrastructure-light adjudication.

taking the minimum strength to 40. For SCDRCs, with a pendency of less than 500, a total of 15 staff positions were recommended. As of 2025, Bihar reported a shortfall of 29% in SCDRC staff.

Lack of data on gender diversity

The CPA, 2019 mandates that among the members (and/or president) there be at least one woman. Bihar SCDRC did not provide data on the share of women among president, members or the staff between 2021 and 2025.

The ranking of states is below:

19 Large and mid-sized states:

State	Consumer Justice Rank
Andhra Pradesh	1
Madhya Pradesh	2
Rajasthan	3
Karnataka	4
West Bengal	5
Haryana	6
Tamil Nadu	7
Assam	8
Uttarakhand	9
Uttar Pradesh	10
Maharashtra	11
Kerala	12
Bihar	13
Gujarat	14
Punjab	15
Odisha	16
Chhattisgarh	17
Jharkhand	18
Telangana	19

9 Small states:

State	Consumer Justice Rank
Meghalaya	1
Sikkim	2
Himachal Pradesh	3
Goa	4
Nagaland	5
Mizoram	6
Tripura	7
Arunachal Pradesh	8
Manipur	9

Justice (Retd.) Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India released the report and said, “the will of the Parliament is reflected in a legislation but if the legislation is made non-functional then will is also defeated. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was expected to improve consumer protection capacity in the country. But it is concerning to find that more than half

the president and member positions in state commissions are vacant and not all districts have formed district commissions. This has persisted despite multiple court orders including during my tenure when we had taken suo motu cognisance of capacity gaps. These significant gaps affect the consumer protection institutional structure and the access to speedy and effective redressal. Furthermore, it erodes the confidence of consumers in grievance redressal in the consumer commissions”.

Justice (retd.) Madan B Lokur said, "the Consumer Protection Act is a beneficent legislation at the centre of which is the ordinary consumer. The report clearly shows that the system is working at subsistence level, with vacancies as high as 40% in State Commissions. One in three cases is pending over three years. It is time the authorities realise that consumption and economic growth is severely affected by the lack of faith in consumer redressal mechanisms. Forty years after the Consumer Protection legislation Act was enacted the situation is terribly grim. It raises the question: Are these commissions really grievance redressal bodies? "

Maja Daruwala, Editor, India Justice Report, said, “The 2019 consumer protection law is designed to respond to the complexities of the changing marketplace in India and globally. While there are improvements and innovations compared to the previous statute, even the most progressive legislation relies on robust institutional mechanisms. Data accessed through RTI show the gaps and neglect in filling leadership vacancies in commissions which undermines the spirit of the consumer protection mandate and leads to ineffective grievance redressal. We find that in consumer commissions gender diversity is restricted to mere compliance, pendency persists, and mediation is ornamental, eventually weakening the promise of institutional resolution and redress for consumers.”

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About the India Justice Report:

The India Justice Report (IJR) is a quantitative index that uses the government’s own statistics to rank the capacity of the formal justice system operating in various states. The IJR is a collaborative effort undertaken by DAKSH, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Common Cause, Centre for Social Justice, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and TISS-Prayas.

First published in 2019, each biennial report tracks improvements and persisting deficits in each state’s structural and financial capacity to deliver justice based on quantitative measurements of budgets, human resources, infrastructure, workload, and diversity across police, judiciary, prisons, legal aid and Human Rights Commissions for all 36 states and UTs.

Annexure I: Consumer Justice Ranking Indicators

S.No	Ranked indicator	Commission measured	Source	Time period
1	President vacancy	State Commissions	Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 5127, answered on 02.04.2025.	2025
2	Member vacancy	State Commissions	Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 5127, answered on 02.04.2025.	2025
3	President vacancy	District Commissions	Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 5127, answered on 02.04.2025.	2025
4	Member vacancy	District Commissions	Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 5127, answered on 02.04.2025	2025
5	Staff vacancy	State Commissions	RTI	2025
6	Women among president and members	State Commissions	RTI	2024
7	Women share among staff	State Commissions	RTI	2024
8	Case clearance rate	State and District Commissions	Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 4320, answered on 26.03.2025	2020 to 2024
9	Cases pending (%) for more than three years	State Commissions	RTI	2025
10	District commissions as a percentage of districts	District Commissions	Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 4320, answered on 26.03.2025	2025
11	Budget utilisation	State Commissions	RTI	F.Y. 2024-25