

## Consumer Protection and Unfair Business Practice Statistics (March 1-31, 2023)

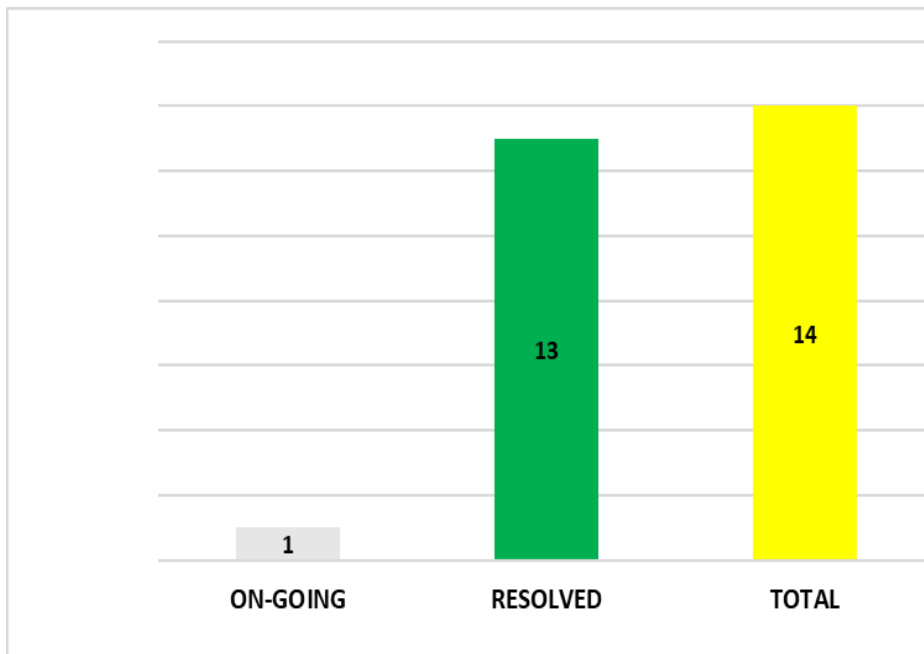
### I. Complaint and Redressal:

Consumer protection is critical to ensuring that consumers are treated fairly by businesses and are not subject to fraudulent or deceptive practices. Some of the pertinent unscrupulous business practices reported to the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA) are price manipulation, false advertising, unethical practices, and denial of services, among others.

As mandated, the CCAA is engaged in numerous advocacy programs, market surveillance, and grievance redressal mechanisms to ensure that consumers are empowered, their rights are safeguarded, and compliance with regulatory requirements are enhanced.

In the month of March 2023, the CCAA received a total of 14 consumer complaints or disputes, of which 13 were successfully resolved through mediation, while one pending case is currently being investigated (Fig. 1).

*Fig. 1: Number of complaints received and resolved*



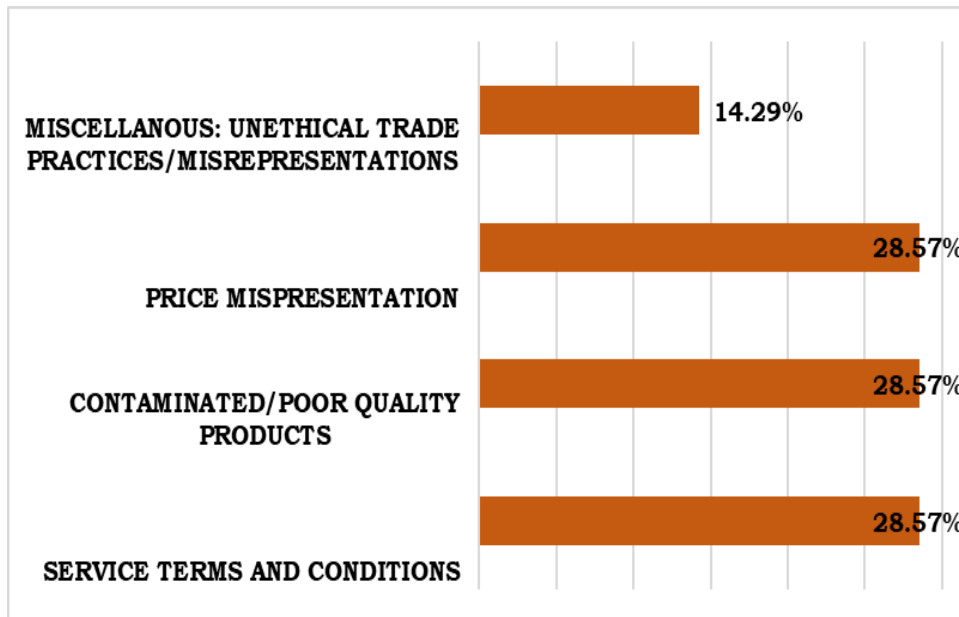
### II. Consumer complaints by nature of violations:

Consumer disputes involve violations of the Consumer Protection Act 2012 and the Consumer Protection Rules and Regulations 2015. The violations of consumer protection law include breaches of terms and conditions, unfair or deceptive trade practices, misleading price

indications, the sale of poor quality or contaminated products, and others like unethical business practices and misleading representations.

During the course of the month, 85.71 percent of complaints were about business entities breaching the terms and conditions, making false or misleading representations of prices, and sale of defective or low-quality products. 14.29 percent were related to unethical trade practices or misrepresentations by businesses (Fig. 2).

*Fig. 2: Complaints by nature of violations*



### III. Referral of complaint to the Dispute Settlement Committee (DSC)

1. The DSC, Thrim Throm, resolved an individual consumer complaint pertaining to the disputes over arrangement of two flight tickets from Paro International Airport to Perth with connecting flights from Singapore to Indonesia [Jakarta (Soekarno-Hatta International Airport) to Bali (Ngurah Rai International Airport)]. The ticket agent is alleged to have informed that Bhutanese do not require visas while transiting through Indonesian Airports. Further the complainant was not allowed to board in from the Singapore Airport and had to rebook the flight toward Perth.

Based on the investigation findings and evidences, DSC directed the ticket agent to refund Nu. 183,692.68/- to the complainant for making a false representation and violating Section 6(1) of the CPA 2012, Rule 4(b), 26(a), and 33(a) of the CPRR 2015.

2. The DSC, Thim throm, also resolved the individual complaint regarding the sale of the vehicle (a Toyota Fortuner 2022-model) through false/misleading indications of price. The complainant made the purchase decision after being informed that 'additional tax' was

not applied for the said vehicle. However, after the transaction the complainant was intimidated to deposit additional tax for the vehicle.

Based on the findings of the investigation and the evidence, DSC decided that the complainant was not liable to pay additional tax and directed that the vehicle dealer shall pay 'additional tax' of Nu. 499,052.10/- to the concerned department for providing misleading information to the consumer and violating Sections 6, 7, and 8 of the CPA 2012.

#### **IV. Market inspection of E-commerce entities**

With the growth in use of social media and e-commerce platforms for shopping, the monitoring of such entities is crucial so they operate in a fair and transparent manner and provide consumers with a safe and trustworthy online marketplace.

During the month, 107 registered e-commerce entities (Table 1) are being monitored to check compliance with market regulatory requirements such as display of the price of the product or services, issuance of purchase receipts, and product labeling, among others.

**Table 1: Total number of registered e-commerce entities**

<b>SI/No</b>	<b>Market Place</b>	<b>No of E-Commerce Entities</b>
1	Chukha	4
2	Mongar	1
3	Paro	4
4	Pemagatshel	1
5	Punakha	1
6	Sarpang	2
7	Thimphu	91
8	Trashigang	1
9	Tsirang	1
10	Wangduephodrang	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>107</b>

Apart from the regulatory requirements, the team is also inspecting and reviewing the cancellation/refund policies of the e-commerce entities. The pertinent findings and action taken report shall be made available after the completion of necessary follow-ups.

## **V. Actions Taken**

During March 2023, the CCAA facilitated the refund of Nu. 49,935/- to the aggrieved consumers and the repair of equipment worth Nu. 31,550/- to a consumer. Furthermore, the business entities were also rectified and advised to comply with the CPA 2012 and CPRR 2015 in vogue.

The CCAA also directed a saw-miller based in Trashigang to facilitate the refund of Nu. 384,070.52/- to the individual consumers. The sawmiller was found non-compliant with NRPC rates for the sawn timber affixed by the Natural Resources Pricing Committee (NRPC), DoFPS. MoAF.

Finally, if an individual feels that a business entity has wronged the market and had an impact on consumers, they should contact the CCAA by dialing **1214 (toll-free)**, filing a complaint online at **[www.ocp.gov.bt](http://www.ocp.gov.bt)**, or walking in during business hours.

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**Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority**  
**Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment**