

# Market Surveillance Report

Chhukha and Samtse Dzongkhags (12–21 June 2026)

## Background

Markets function best when consumers can make informed choices and businesses compete fairly. To safeguard consumer rights and promote transparent business practices, the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA) conducted market surveillance in the outskirts of Chhukha and Samtse Dzongkhags from 12 to 21 June 2026.

The surveillance was undertaken to inspect market areas that could not be covered during the initial market inspection due to time, distance and logistical constraints. The exercise was intended to ensure comprehensive coverage of business establishments across both Dzongkhags and to assess compliance with consumer protection requirements.

## Coverage

A total of 126 business establishments were inspected during the surveillance period. The establishments included restaurants, grocery and general shops, garment shops, hardware outlets, beauty salons, bakeries, vegetable vendors, meat shops, cement agents, and Fuel Retail Outlets (FROs).

In addition to routine consumer protection checks, Fuel Retail Outlets were assessed for calibration compliance, price display, and safety requirements.

*Table I: Distribution of Establishments Inspected*

Business Type	Chhukha	Samtse
Restaurants	15	18
Grocery/General Shops	31	34
Garments	3	6
Meat Shops	0	1
Vegetable Vendors	0	1
Hardware Shops	2	5
Electronic/Stationeries/Cosmetics	1	2
Bakery	2	0
Fuel Retail Outlets	2	3
Total	56	70

## **Findings and Observations**

### *Fuel Retail Outlets: Accuracy and Consumer Confidence*

The Fuel Retail Outlets inspected were found to be compliant with calibration requirements.

A total of five Fuel Retail Outlets across Chhukha and Samtse Dzongkhags, comprising 18 High-Speed Diesel (HSD) dispensing pumps and 13 Motor Spirit (MS) dispensing pumps, underwent calibration testing by the Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB). All pumps were found to be dispensing fuel within the permissible range.

Due to continuous rainfall and road accessibility challenges, the inspection team was unable to visit Fuel Retail Outlets located in Phuntshogpelri (Pugli) and Dorokha under Samtse Dzongkhag. Nevertheless, valid calibration certificates issued by the BSB were verified and collected for record purposes.

The dispensing pumps had been inspected, verified, and certified by the BSB, with calibration validity extending from December 2025 to November 2026.

No discrepancies were observed in fuel dispensing accuracy, price display, or safety requirements. These findings provide assurance that consumers are receiving the quantity of fuel they pay for and that fuel retailers are adhering to established standards.

### *General Business Compliance: Signs of Improvement*

Overall compliance levels among business establishments in Chhukha and Samtse Dzongkhags were found to be satisfactory.

Businesses demonstrated improved awareness of consumer protection requirements and regulatory obligations. This positive trend is largely attributable to the awareness and advocacy programmes recently conducted by the CCAA.

Required information, including price displays and business details, was generally maintained by the establishments inspected.

### *Product Labelling*

Product labelling compliance stood at 77%, indicating that most businesses ensured the presence of the minimum required information on locally packaged goods.

Proper labelling remains important for consumers, as it enables them to make informed purchasing decisions and promotes transparency regarding the products they buy.

### *Issuance of Purchase Receipts*

Approximately 85% of businesses issued purchase receipts upon request.

While this reflects a generally positive level of compliance, receipt issuance remains an area requiring further improvement, particularly among newly established vendor stalls where receipts were not issued consistently.

Purchase receipts serve as an important safeguard for consumers by providing proof of purchase and facilitating returns, exchanges, or complaint resolution when necessary.

### *Price Display*

Approximately 80% of establishments clearly displayed selling prices, helping consumers make informed purchasing decisions and reducing the likelihood of overcharging.

Random verification of bills and shelf price tags confirmed that billed prices matched displayed prices in hardware shops and vegetable markets.

The findings suggest that businesses are increasingly recognizing the importance of price transparency in fostering consumer trust.

### *Weighing and Measuring Devices*

Excluding beauty salons, restaurants, and bakeries, 76% of business entities using weighing and measuring devices were inspected and found to have properly calibrated equipment.

Accurate weighing and measuring practices are essential to ensuring fairness in quantity-based transactions. Consumers purchasing goods by weight must be able to trust that they are receiving the quantities for which they have paid.

Two business entities were found using non-calibrated weighing scales. However, these scales had been recently purchased as replacements after their previously calibrated scales became defective.

### *Refund and Return Policies*

Approximately 90% of shops did not clearly display refund and return policies.

Nevertheless, businesses generally considered refund and return requests under genuine circumstances. Several hardware shops also accepted returns, exchanges, and refunds on a partial basis.

In most cases, these policies were communicated verbally to customers at the time of purchase rather than being displayed prominently within the premises.

During the inspection, several hardware shop owners expressed concerns regarding the continuation of refund practices due to GST-related complications.

The absence of clearly displayed policies may create uncertainty for consumers regarding their rights and the remedies available to them following a purchase.

### *Consumer Treatment and Fair Pricing*

No major issues relating to discriminatory treatment of consumers were observed during the inspection of hardware shops and vegetable markets.

Prices charged were generally consistent with displayed prices during random inspections, indicating fair pricing practices and compliance with basic consumer protection requirements.

### **Actions Taken**

To strengthen compliance and promote good business practices, the following actions were undertaken:

- Newly established business entities were provided guidance on basic compliance requirements and consumer protection obligations.
- The two business entities found using non-calibrated weighing scales were advised to use calibrated weighing scales available from neighbouring calibrated business entities for all quantity-based transactions.
- They were further instructed to present their new weighing scales for calibration during the next calibration exercise to be conducted by the Bhutan Standards Bureau in November 2026.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The surveillance exercise indicates a generally satisfactory level of compliance with the Consumer Protection Act and related regulations across Chhukha and Samtse Dzongkhags.

Positive practices were observed in areas such as fuel dispensing accuracy, weighing and measuring standards, and price transparency, particularly within hardware and vegetable markets. These measures contribute directly to consumer confidence and help ensure fair market transactions.

At the same time, several areas require continued attention. Compliance gaps remain in receipt issuance, product labelling, complaint-handling mechanisms, and the display of refund and return policies. Addressing these shortcomings would further strengthen consumer protection and improve transparency in the marketplace.

The findings also suggest that the awareness and advocacy programmes recently conducted by the CCAA have yielded positive results. Businesses appear increasingly aware of their obligations, and compliance levels have improved across many sectors. Continued outreach, education, and periodic surveillance will be important to sustain these gains and foster a marketplace that is fair, transparent, and responsive to consumer interests.

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