

Project Note: Standardisation of Pack Sizes in Edible Oils

A Study on Standard Pack Sizes in Edible Oils after the 2022–23 Relaxation: Market Behaviour, Consumer Impact and Regulatory Lessons (February 2026)

Objective

The study examined how the 2022 omission of the Second Schedule to the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 which had mandated standard pack sizes for essential commodities, including edible oils was used or exploited by the industry and whether subsequent market conduct supported the case for reinstating standardised pack sizes.

Scope

The study combined:

- (i) doctrinal analysis of the statutory architecture under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 and the 2022–23 deregulatory amendments (GSR 226(E) and GSR 714(E));
- (ii) an empirical survey of urban respondents (consumers and shopkeepers) on pack-size awareness, comparability and confusion;
- (iii) a comparative review of legal metrology regimes in the EU, UK, USA and ASEAN; and
- (iv) an assessment of competition and consumer-protection implications under the Competition Act, 2002 and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Main Findings

- De-standardisation led to a proliferation of irregular, non-round pack sizes (e.g., 810 ml, 875 ml, 920 ml) clustered around familiar benchmarks, resulting in SKU proliferation and operational inefficiencies for businesses.
- About 70% of respondents did not regularly calculate unit price, undermining the policy assumption that unit-price disclosure alone would guide consumer choice; over two-thirds found comparison across visually similar but differently sized packs confusing.
- Nearly 70% of respondents reported having felt misled about quantity after purchase and an overwhelming majority (92%) favoured a legal requirement for standard pack sizes.
- Comparative jurisdictions (EU, UK, USA, ASEAN) that relaxed fixed pack sizes did so alongside strong compensatory safeguards, robust unit-pricing regimes, high consumer literacy and active enforcement — conditions not yet matched in the Indian retail environment.
- Industry associations independently sought restoration of standard sizes, indicating convergence between consumer and business interests rather than a genuine ease-of-business trade-off.
- The study concluded that reintroduction of calibrated standard pack sizes for edible oils is statutorily feasible under Section 52 of the Legal Metrology Act, constitutionally sustainable and necessary to restore structural comparability alongside disclosure-based safeguards.

Regulatory Uptake

The Chair is glad to note that the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, in its amendment to the Standard Operating Procedure for edible oils and fats (announced 6 June 2026), has prescribed standard pack sizes for edible oils (200 ml/g, 500 ml/g, and whole-litre/kg sizes up to 20 litres/kg), along with mandatory declaration of equivalent weight alongside volume — incorporating the central recommendation of this study.

Source: PIB press release, "[Department of Consumer Affairs Prescribes Standard Pack Sizes for Edible Oils under Legal Metrology Framework](#)," 6 June 2026.