

A Study on Consumer Awareness on Consumer Protection Act with special reference on Haryana

Dr. Upender Sethi, Associate Professor, Pt. CLS. Govt. college, Sector14, Karnal

ABSTRACT

In this competitive era, consumer is considered as the king in the market, but actually the king is misguided and exploited by his kingdom especially in the developing and underdeveloped countries like India. The present study aims to analyse the perception of consumers towards Consumer Protection Act and to ascertain the consumer protection awareness among consumers in the State Haryana. The simple percentage analyses and chi square analysis have been applied to analyze the association between consumer awareness and various demographic factors. The study proves that awareness level of Consumers is low and they have no knowledge about consumers' rights in depth, so enforcement of these rights is not possible by them.

Keywords: Consumer, Consumer awareness, consumer Protection Legislations.

INTRODUCTION

In the current trend of Marketing, the consumer is a lifeblood of all its functioning. The market gets shrewd and sometimes the consumer has to suffer the brunt of it. Therefore, consumer protection is an act of providing consumers with complete information about the goods, services and their rights. Consumer awareness is very important as they invest their time and money in marketing activities and they have a right to transparent information. Misleading advertisement, unsafe products, overcharging and unweighing and other malpractices are performed by unscrupulous businessmen. Consumer awareness is an act of saving consumers from such delinquencies.

CONSUMER:

A "consumer" is a person who buys any goods or hires any service for valuable consideration (including deferred payment). The term does not include a person who obtains goods or services for resale or for any commercial purpose. However, persons who avail goods or services exclusively for the purpose of earning their livelihood by means of self employment are considered as 'consumers'.

CONSUMER (a) The term "Consumer" is defined in section 2(1) (d) of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Consumer Sec 2(i) consumer means any person who (1) buys any goods for a consideration which has been paid (or) promised (or) partly paid and partly promised. (b) Under any system of deferent payments.

The Act aims at providing a better protection to the interest of consumers by the establishment of consumer's council and other authorities for the settlement of consumers and related matters other Laws showing spirit of Consumerism

1. The Indian Penal Code Act, 1866.
2. The Code of Civil Procedures, 1908.
3. The Sale of Goods Act, 1930.
4. The Agricultural Produce Act, 1937.
5. The Drug and Magic Remedies Act, 1954.
6. The Protection of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.
7. The Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
8. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.
9. The Trade and Merchandise mane Act, 1958.
10. The Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1963.
11. The Specific Relief Act, 1963.
12. The Monopolistic and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969.
13. The drug and Cosmetics Act, 1972.
14. The Five Purchase Act, 1972.
15. The Indian Contract Act, 1972.
16. The Export (Quality control and Inspection).
17. The Code of Criminal Procedures Act, 1973.
18. The Environment Protection Act, 1973.
19. The Air Act, 1981.

The Act seeks to provide speedup and simple redresses to consumer disputes, quasi machinery is sought to be set up the district, state, and central levels.

POINTS FOR CONSUMER AWARENESS

Purchasing under public distribution system

Public Distribution System Outlets (ration shops) are distributing commodities against family cards at subsidized rates. Consumer should ensure that

- Commodities are provided in correct weight without denial
- Display board is placed in front of every shop indicating available commodities and their quantity with selling price of each product
- Samples of commodities are placed for notice of card holders
- In the absence of any of above complaint can be made to Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department, Government of Haryana

Purchase of cosmetics

While buying cosmetics consumer should

- Not be carried away through Colorful misleading advertisements
- Check manufacturing date and date of expiry
- keep in mind that Colours are almost Chemicals
- keep in mind that following statements are mostly false “100% Natural”, “Chemicals not used”, “Oil free”
- Consult other users
- If you have any grievance/complaint, you may file it with the Local Drug Inspector or with the Controller of Drugs,

Purchase of drugs

- Purchase to be made only as per prescription by Registered Medical Practitioner Self medication is dangerous
- Checking for manufacturing date / expiry date •Checking name of medicine purchased with prescription
- Checking availability of Maximum Retail Price on the strips containers •Insisting for bill with details of batch number etc. printed over strips / containers •Checking for dosage and perseverance details of medicines •If you have any grievance/complaint, you may file it with the Local Drug Inspector or with the Controller of Drugs

Purchase of gold & Clothes

- Checking for “Hall Mark” •Weight of stones to be separately noted down in bills while purchasing ornaments with precious stones •Obtaining purchase bills and keeping it safely •In case of grievances you may issue a notice to the seller or file a complaint with Bureau of Indian Standards at www.bis.org.in
- Checking whether clothes withstand normal washing habits •Insisting and obtaining bills and preserving them
- Insisting for “silk mark” while purchasing costly silk sarees •If you have any grievance you may send a notice to the seller/manufacturer or file a petition in the District Consumer Forum

Misleading advertisements

Consumer should always •be alert about the advertisements while going for purchase of goods afresh or in exchange of old product •not be carried away by statements like free offers / discounts etc. since they are not the deciding factors for the requirement of consumers •not be misled through colourful glamorous advertisements

Purchase of food products

- Don't buy spoilt products. It is dangerous to health •Check manufacturing and expiry date, weight, manufacturer address etc. •If perishables, check if it has been stored in freezer/cold storage properly. •Avoid cheap and colourful food with hazardous colour additives •Avoid products without manufacturer address. You have no recourse in case of any problem •Avoid purchase of unbranded products like oil without sealed packs

Packaged commodities

Every packed commodity has to carry the following information •Name and address of packer / manufacturer •Name of commodity •Net quantity / Weight •Month and year of packing and expiry date •Maximum Retail selling price •Quality assurance symbols like AGMARK, FPO, ISI etc. •Other relevant information (regarding ingredients of product)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr.S.Mohan and V.Suganthi (2013), Rural Consumers' Awareness about Consumers'Rights. The study conducted to know the awareness level of rural consumers about the consumers' rights. The study revealed that there is a significant association between age, educational qualification, marital status and monthly income of rural consumers and their awareness about consumer rights. And there is no significant association between gender, type of family, occupation and monthly income of rural consumers and their level of consumer rights awareness.

Dr.Horen Goowalla (2016), studied under A study on consumer protection: Its awareness among the rural people in Assam: A case study with special reference to Jorhat district of Assam. A survey was conducted on 400 consumers. 90% of the people surveyed have felt exploited by the seller at one time or the others. 75% people were aware of the Consumer Protection Act, 25% of the people are not. It is also found that 40% of graduate respondents were aware of the products and their quality while 30% Post Graduates

Jamuna (2017), searched under the title, Consumer awareness and attitudes towards Consumer Protection Act 1986. The study was conducted to find the consumer awareness level. In the study, responses were taken from the respondents related with consumer responsibilities. Majority respondents had given first rank to get guarantee and warranty card. It was also found that 67.14% respondents have awareness about the consumer forums and 53.21% respondents felt that formalities are simple. Majority respondents disagreed with the argument that Consumer awareness increased with Consumer Protection Act. 25% respondents felt that trade has increased due to Consumer Protection Act. Only 20% respondents had given the opinion that Consumer Protection Act created quality consciousness among the consumers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is undertaken for the following objects:

- To measure the level of awareness on consumer rights among the respondents.
- To offer valuable suggestions to improve the awareness level based on the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct the study on consumer awareness towards consumer rights, towards quality assurance standards, the relevant data were collected from both the primary and the secondary data. The primary data were collected from the general consumers through a well structured interview schedule and the secondary data were collected from various published sources. For the purpose of studying the awareness level among the consumers of Haryana a sample of 500 sample respondents was selected from all over the State of Haryana by using the Purposive-cum-Convenience sampling techniques.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

The simple percentage analyses and chi square analysis have been applied to analyze the awareness level of the respondent consumers towards consumer rights.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

Table –(1)

Classification of Sample Respondents (Percentage Analysis)

Categories	Frequencies	Percentage
Age		
15-25	174	34.80
25-35	187	37.40
35-45	80	16.00
45-55	41	8.20
55 and above	18	3.60
Total	500	100.00
Gender		
Male	284	56.80
Female	216	43.20
Total	500	100.00
Area of Residence		
Rural	122	24.40
Urban	378	75.60
Total	500	100.00
Education		
Upto Matric	44	8.80
Under-Graduate	55	11.00
Graduate	112	22.40
Post-Graduate	226	45.20
Professionals	63	12.60
Total	500	100.00
Occupational		
Business	58	11.60
Service	180	36.00
Study	138	27.60
Profession	76	15.20
House wife	34	6.80
Agriculture	14	2.80
Total	500	100.00
Income		
Below 5000	90	18.00
5000-10000	134	26.80
10000-15000	82	16.40
15000-20000	93	18.60
20000 and Above	101	20.20
Total	500	100.00

The above table 1 shows the respondents in 21 to 40 categories in age group who are professionals earn income of Rs. 10001 to Rs. 20000 were highly aware about the consumer protection Act. Many consumers had awareness about redressal rights and corrective measures of the consumer courts like payment of insured sum,

compensation and replacement of goods, etc. consumers also approach Voluntary Consumer Organization and they were satisfied on its services. Consumer faces such problems like hesitation of obeying the orders and they suggest that the court have limited powers to penalize the malpractices.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Consumers should be aware about their rights and responsibilities themselves by collecting as much as information from different sources. Government and nongovernment organizations should organize awareness camps both to rural people and urban people.
2. Proper publicity should be given about consumer rights and consumer protection acts on mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc. In this era of information technology, various Social Medias and new media's can be used to spread awareness.
3. Consumers should check the marks of standard like AGMARK, ISI, BIS etc. in order to avoid malpractices by manufacturers and traders to an extent. Government should take immediate action against malpractices of manufacturers and traders.
4. The consumers' grievances should be finalized within reasonable time and with reasonable compensation.

CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals that only twenty percent of respondent consumers have abnormal state of awareness on perceived six consumer rights and the awareness level on staying eighty six percent isn't much great. The best enthusiasm of consumers must be secured through effective cooperation among consumers, representatives and government. The Administration must make solid strides in expanding consumer awareness; encourage consumer instruction, preparing and explore. The accomplishment of consumerism" is conceivable just when every one of the consumers is completely mindful of their rights.

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