



Study on Consumer's Opinion about Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism in India

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Abstract:

Every person born is a consumer, who is constantly consuming various goods and services. Consumer are the foundation of economic building. They are the main pillar of economic development in any country. It is said that the consumer is the king of market, but it is exploited from time to time. The government enacted the Consumer Protection Act on 24th December 1986 to stop consumer exploitation and protect the interest of consumer. Under the provision of the Consumer Protection Act Three Tier grievance machinery or redressal agency establish at district, state and national level to provide simple and speedy redressal of consumer disputes. The purpose of this study is to find out the opinion of the consumers regarding the consumer grievance redressal mechanism. The study is based on primary and secondary data. Sample size of 100 consumer has been taken through convenient random sampling method.

Keywords:

Consumer, Consumer Protection, Grievance, Consumer Rights, Redressal, Exploitation.

Introduction:

Consumer is the person who buy goods or services for their own use. Consumer is the main pillar of national economy. The main components of market is the consumer. Consumer should get maximum satisfaction from the goods they buy. it is the seller's duty to supply goods in sufficient quantity at the right price. Consumer should get fair compensation for the goods and services they have purchased, but many time it is seen that the key factor in the market is always exploitation in many way such as-

1. False weight and measures
2. Sub-standard quality
3. More price than MRP
4. False and incomplete information
5. Misleading advertisement
6. Creation of artificial scarcity in the market
7. Unsatisfactory after sale services etc.

Under the provision of Consumer Protection Act Three Tier grievance machinery or redressal agency establish at district, state and national level to provide simple and speedy justice. The three redressal agencies under the Consumer Protection Act, 1930 are District Commission, State Commission, and National Commission.

1. District Commission

A district commission includes a president (who can be a working or retired judge of the District Court) and two other members. They are appointed by the state government. One can file a complaint for goods and services of ₹1 crore or less in this agency. For the complaints filed, if the district commission feels a requirement, it sends the goods to the laboratory for testing and gives its decision based on the laboratory report and facts. If the aggrieved party is not happy with the jurisdiction of the district commission, then they can appeal against the judgment of this agency in the State Commission within 45 days.

2. State Commission

A state commission includes a president (who must be a working or retired judge of the High Court) and at least two other members. They are appointed by the state government. One can file a complaint of goods and services worth less than ₹10 crores and more than ₹1 crore in this agency. After receiving a complaint from the aggrieved party, the state commission contacts the party against whom the complaint has been filed. Also, for the complaints filed, if the state commission feels a requirement, it sends the goods to the laboratory for testing. If the aggrieved party is not happy with the jurisdiction of the state commission, then they can appeal against the judgment of this agency in the National Commission within 30 days by depositing 50% of the fine money.

3. National Commission

A national commission includes a president and four other members one of whom shall be a woman, and Central Government appoints them. One can file a complaint of goods and services worth more than ₹10 crores in this agency. After receiving a complaint from the aggrieved party, the national commission informs the party against whom the complaint has been filed. Also, for the complaints filed, if the state commission feels a requirement, it sends the goods to the laboratory for testing, and then gives judgement based on the reports. If the aggrieved party is not happy with the jurisdiction of the national commission, then they can appeal against the judgment of this agency in the Supreme Court within 30 days by depositing 50% of the fine money.

All this information is important and beneficial for all people. It is the duty of every citizen to know the consumer grievance redressal system. This paper tried to study the consumer opinion about Consumer Grievance Redressal Machinery.

Objectives:

1. To study the consumer opinion about consumer grievance redressal mechanism.
2. To give suggestion for the improvement of consumer grievance redressal system.

Literature Review:

Review of literature is the backbone of every research. Research study conducted early in the similar area will give an idea about the present research problem. Review of literature will help understand the research problem. Many research studies were conducted on consumer awareness towards consumer rights and consumer protection laws.

1. Ranbabu and Kumar (2020): a study was conducted to find the awareness level about quality assurance mark. The study revealed that respondents of Hyderabad district were having more awareness than respondents of the Mahabubnagar district about the quality assurance mark.
2. Serena, Shekhar (2009): had done a study the level of awareness about consumer rights by women consumer of Palanpur city in Gujrat and the study revealed that majority of the women consumer showed low level of awareness and low utilization of consumer rights.
3. Devi and Rao (2016): the study was conducted to understand the level of consumer awareness among educated and uneducated consumers. The study revealed that majority of the consumers both educated and uneducated do not have knowledge of their consumer rights, laws and provision.

4. Singh (2014): conducted a study to measure the level of consumer awareness and evaluate the effect of Jago Grahak Jago on students. The study revealed that there was a significant effect of mass media campaigns on consumer buying behavior but these changes are mostly informal. There was no knowledge implementation in practical way.

5. Giradharan and Kalidoss (2015): had done a study the level of awareness about consumer rights and consumerism among college teachers. The study revealed that majority of the college teachers had low level of awareness about consumer rights when buying goods and services, consumer protection measures and product certification.

Research Methodology:

Considering the objective, descriptive and analytical method adopted for the study. The primary data was collected from individual consumer who is active in various kind of consumption activities. The nature of data used in study had been collected by using a structured questionnaire. The sample size of taken as 200 respondents. This questionnaire were filled up by 200 respondents living in urban areas of Nashik city. And secondary data was collected through various books, articles and newspapers and Internet.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

1. Do you know about Consumer Protection Act?

Sr. No.	Respondents	Yes	No
No.	200	130	70
Percentage	100 %	65 %	35 %

Out of 200 respondents 130 Consumers know about Consumer Protection Act and 70 Consumers don't know about Consumer Protection Act.

2. Do you aware about Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism?

Sr. No.	Respondents	Yes	No
No.	200	90	110
Percentage	100	45%	55%

Out of 200 respondents Majority of the respondents are not aware about Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism only 90 consumers are not aware about Consume Grievance Redressal Mechanism.

3. As a Consumer do you know where to report fraud?

Sr. No.	Respondents	Yes	No
No.	200	120	80
Percentage	100 %	60 %	40 %

Out of 100 % respondents only 60 % respondents know where to report fraud, and 40% respondent do not have any idea, where to report fraud.

4. Do you know Three Tier Redressal Mechanism under Consumer Protection Act?

Sr. No.	Respondents	Yes	No
No.	200	80	120
Percentage	100 %	40 %	60 %

Out of 100% respondents Majority of the respondents are unaware about Three Tier Redressal Mechanism under Consumer Protection Act only 40 % respondents know about Three Tier Redressal Mechanism under Consumer Protection Act.

5. Do you satisfied with the functioning of the Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism?

Sr.No.	Respondents	Yes	No
No.	200	90	110
Percentage	100 %	45 %	55 %

It was very shocking that Out of 200 respondents only 90 respondents are satisfied with the function of Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism. and 110 respondents are not satisfied with the function of Consumer grievance Redressal Mechanism.

Conclusion and Suggestions

It is revealed from the study that majority of the consumer are not aware about consumer grievance redressal mechanism. Even they do not aware about their rights and responsibility as a consumer. Consumer has knowledge about Consumer Protection Act and Three Tier Redressal Mechanism of National, State and District level but they are not aware of how this judicial system work and how much amount of claim that can be filed here. It is revealed from the study that majority of the respondents are not Satisfied of the functioning of the Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism. Consumer feels that filing a complaint in a consumer forum is a time consuming process and redressal by filing a complaint in a consumer forum is very delayed. And also consumer feel that since many complaints are already pending in the consumer forum, further complaints will not be redressed quickly. Many consumer have misconception about the consumer grievance redressal mechanism. Consumers do not know for whom and how this system works.

Therefore, it is very important to clear the misconceptions that consumers have about the Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism. Complaints filed in consumer forums should be attended to properly and at the earliest. So that customers get proper justice. And the misunderstandings among the customers will be removed. Also, it is necessary to create awareness among the customers about the customer complaint redressal system. Consumer need to be informed about how this system work. Through radio, newspaper, T.V. awareness should be created among the consumer about Consumer Grievance Redressal Mechanism.

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