

# A Study on Women's Awareness Related to Consumer Rights in Jamnagar

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## **Abstract –**

Consumer in today's economy is a person who buys good or hires services for consumption. Therefore every person who buys things from the market which are necessary to maintain life is a consumer. Consumers face a number of problems due to their unconsciousness ignorance, illiteracy and unorganised. "A study on women's awareness related to consumer rights in Jamnagar" in this study analysed that, there is some correlation between age and consumer awareness about Consumer Rights. There is some correlation between educational qualification and consumer awareness about Consumer Rights. There is some correlation between occupation and consumer awareness about Consumer Rights. Over all age wise, education wise and occupation wise more than 47 percentage women had medium level of awareness about Consumer Rights. The consumer education program should be organised by government in rural areas also to developing awareness about consumer rights, consumer protection act and redressal mechanism. Consumer should effectively exercise for his rights, consumer protection act and redressal mechanism. Consumer should organize together as consumers to develop the strength and influence to promote and protect consumer interest. Consumer should have active role in consumerism and consumer education.

**Key words – consumer awareness, consumer rights, women**

## **Introduction –**

Consumer in today's economy is a person who buys good or hires services for consumption. Therefore every person who buys things from the market which are necessary to maintain life is a consumer. Consumers face a number of problems due to their ignorance and poor buying practices. Some problems are created by the seller when they use fraudulent and misleading methods of sale. The consumer therefore has to be vigilant and glared against such tactics used by sellers. The lack of awareness on the part of consumer and absence of effective consumer organizations have acted as constrains on consumer protection. In actual practice, the consumers are not aware of their rights, and even if they are aware, they seldom exercise them. This is so because the consumers in India are victims of a large number of restrictive and unfair trade practices, and also false claims of products blatantly advertised. The marketing strategy exploits the consumers ruthlessly by stimulating the weak points and soft corners of their minds. Misleading, false or deceptive advertisements are quite common. In our family system, a women as a homemaker is extensively involved in the procuring, utilizing and managing the goods and services consumed by the family. As women don't have much knowledge and access to the knowledge resources, they undergo maximum instances of impulsive and irrational buying. The consequences of lack of knowledge are much worse for women. In this situation it is very necessary for women to be aware of their consumer rights.

## **Awareness of Consumer Rights –**

Basically these are four rights of the consumers (i) the right to safety; (ii) the right to be informed; (iii) the right to choose and (iv) the right to be heard. Based on the U.N. charter of human rights, these were first spelt out by John F. Kennedy when he was president of America. Four other rights added to the list later were (v) Right to satisfaction of basic needs and against exploitation (vi) the right to consumer education (vii) the right to get the grievances redressed and (viii) the right to a healthy environment that will protect and enhance the quality of life.

### **1) Right to be heard –**

There are two different aspects of the consumers' right to be heard: (1) representation of consumer interest for advising those concerned regarding product quality, prices, consumer preferences and such like and (2) the redressal machinery for attending to complaints and making good any shortcomings in the products and services sold. But as the consumers are not organised, the right to be heard remain only on paper. Manufacturers, distributors, traders, the government or the local bodies also rarely respect.

**2) Right to be informed –**

One of the rights of the consumer is to be informed. When the consumer wants to buy an item, he must be given complete information about it. He must be informed of the safety and economy aspects. That he can avoid hazards and get maximum returns from his investment in product. He should have complete knowledge about the safety and durability of the product, after sales service, proper use of product, precautions to be taken and some repairs become necessary.

The present system of product labelling leaves much to be desired. In short, Consumers are having the right to be informed of the quality, possible adverse side effects and other relevant facts concerning the product or service. But, very often he is ill-informed and worse still, misinformed.

**3) Right to safety –**

This right protected against the marketing goods, which are hazardous to health or life. Consumers' health or safety of life is ensured here. There are unsafe products, unstated dangers in product performance and inadequate service after sale. This right provides protection against all these. Consumers should be well guarded from any physical danger or difficulty or discomfort due to poor quality or sudden failure of the product. Consumers are assured of quality, reliability and performance by this right.

To protect consumers', government provided protection by making standardization process compulsory although there are number of products in the market which prove unsafe for the consumers either because of its quality or performance. The consumer is hardly conscious of his right to safety.

**4) Right to choose –**

This right assured consumer to be variety of products and services at competitive prices and good quality at fair prices. The consumer is having the right to choose the goods he wants from a wide variety of goods available in the market. However, very often, he fails to make a good choice, because of confounding high-pressure selling techniques.

**5) Right to satisfaction of basic needs and against exploitation –**

This right implies that all consumers should have access to the mean to meet their basic needs. Consumer should be protected from unethical and illegal practices by sales techniques and pressure, misleading advertising, adulteration, short weight and measures and so many fraudulent and deceptive practices, especially in the provision of healthcare, food, housing, water, energy and basic services, employment, education, financial and investment services.

**6) Right to redress –**

This right provide consumer to seek redress against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers. It also includes right to fair settlement of genuine grievances of the consumer. If the performance and quality be short of expectations, a consumer has a right to redress. Thus, this is the right to expect every product must be repaired, replaced or taken by the seller. Consumers must make complaint for their genuine grievances for that he can take the help of consumer organizations in seeking redress of their grievances.

**7) Right to consumer education –**

The right to consumer education means the right to acquire the knowledge and skill to be an informed consumer throughout life. Ignorance of consumer is mainly responsible for their exploitation. Today's market is flooded with products and consumers are becoming confused to what they buy. They have limited knowledge and most of the consumer; particularly rural consumers are not well informed therefore there is a need for consumer education. Consumers are not trained for product evaluation and are not able to distinguish between a good quality product and poor quality product because consumers are misinformed.

**8) Right to healthy environment –**

This right enlarges the scope and significance of modern consumerism for improved their life. Environmental problems like different type of pollution do affect the quality life of consumer. Consumer can be protected from environmental pollution by promoting the use of products, which are environmentally sustainable.

**Review of related literature –****Roy Smita, (2015)**

Study revealed that urban people are more aware about consumer rights and the knowledge of consumer protection acts than the rural area. This consciousness was mostly seen amongst the urban people as because the literacy rate was comparatively high so they turn enables them to make informed purchases. Some awareness programs organized there was made them aware.

Youth are more aware of consumer rights due to their course curriculum and male are more aware of consumer rights because of exposed to the outer world. Consumer gave more preference to price, quality and

advertisement. Consumer who possessed less formal education, show less interest for the programs related to consumer rights as compared to consumer who possessed to more formal education.

#### **Hakim, Iqbal Ahmad, (2015)**

He noted that generally people had low awareness about the consumer rights. Educated, nuclear family, high income group, professionals/executives and male had high level of consumer right awareness. Age and marital status had not significant impact on the level of awareness about consumer right. Majority people were unaware about the location of consumer courts and other complaint redress facilitating bodies. They had only primary knowledge about the existence of some laws. There had a high level of dissatisfaction about the procedure followed by the manufacturer, sellers for handling the consumer complaints. They had complaints about the exploitation of consumers by businessmen. Low educated, middle class and female had negative attitude towards consumerism. Different age group, family size and marital status did not have very significant difference towards the consumerism. They had lack of faith in the government regulations.

#### **Mohammad Azvar Khan,<sup>34</sup> (2013)**

He found from the study that consumer became aware of their rights through television, radio, newspapers and other sources whereas government had failed to spread consumer right and acts. Majority of both rural and urban consumers reported that illiteracy and failure to implement CPA were the main causes for lack of an effective consumer movement. The sex and marital status of the consumers had associated with the awareness, the age, education qualifications, occupation, size of family and income of the consumer influenced their awareness. Consumers were not completely satisfied with the consumer dispute redressal forum.

#### **Kirubanandam, T., (2002)**

The basic knowledge of consumer protection act were very moderate (32%) and awareness about rights was comparatively low, in spite of higher level of literacy. The membership in consumer protection council was very low (10.6%) which showed that consumers had very low interest relating to consumer affairs. Urban respondents had more membership in consumer organization than the respondents of rural. Media played a prominent role in creating awareness about the consumer protection act and consumer rights.

#### **G, Rambabu & L.Vinod Kumar, (2017)**

They reported that consumer right awareness was moderate. There were no significant relationship between consumer right awareness and gender, age, education, occupation and income level.

#### **Nurnobi Islam, et.al. (2016)**

He presented status of awareness in Bangladesh that consumer think that they deceived but they remain silent only 18% claimed complained the authority but didn't get positive result. The most important matter was that even sellers were not enough knowledge to provide the required information about the product so right to be informed was violated. In case of after sale services consumers suffered a lot. Female were less aware than the male. The main causes of poor consumer right protection was Illiteracy, unconsciousness, act and ordinance were backdated.

#### **Objectives of the study**

Objectives of the study are as follow:

- 1) To find out women consumers awareness level regarding consumer rights.
- 2) To study correlation between women consumer awareness about consumer rights and women's age, education and occupation.

#### **Research methodology:**

There were 500 women consumer were selected randomly from Jamnagar. A structured schedule was developed by the investigator to study the level of women consumer awareness regarding the consumer rights. The schedule was constructed regarding consumer rights in simple way that a common people can response. The three main independent variables of the study were age, education and occupation. The statistical measures used for the analysis of the data were percentage, averages and chi-square test.

#### **Major findings:**

- 1) Variable age wise young and middle age group respondents were in large group where as old age group respondents were very less (9.4%)
- 2) About the level of educational qualification - almost 90.8 percent of respondents were up to 12<sup>th</sup> and up to graduation of educational qualification.
- 3) Almost 60 percentage respondents were home-maker and remain other were employee or self employed.
- 4) Higher percentage of women consumers of all age had medium level of awareness about consumer rights.
- 5) Higher percentage of women consumers of all educational qualification had medium level of awareness about consumer rights.

- 6) Higher percentage of women consumers from all occupation had medium level of awareness about consumer rights.
- 7) There is some correlation between age and consumer awareness about consumer rights.
- 8) There is some correlation between educational qualification and consumer awareness about consumer rights.
- 9) There is some correlation between occupation and consumer awareness about consumer rights.
- 10) Over all age, education and occupation wise 47 percentage women had medium level of awareness about consumer rights.

### **Conclusion and recommendation –**

Over all age wise, education wise and occupation wise more than 47 percentage women had medium level of awareness about Consumer Rights. There is voluminous legislation on various aspects of consumer protection, but its utility is greatly reduced in the absence of an honest administrative machinery to implement it and unawareness of consumers. In case of lack awareness of consumer regarding their rights is one of reasons so they should be armed with proper education about their rights. It is no doubt necessary to be aware of these rights, but there is also need for exercising them. The indifference on the part of consumers is responsible for the denial of consumer rights. Awareness of consumers' rights is sought to be fostered by introducing consumerism as a course in secondary school syllabi.

### **Recommendation for Government –**

- 1) The consumers can effectively exercise their rights only when there is government support. But, this is lacking at present. This cell receives and processes complaints, grievances, suggestions, comments and any other feedback from the consumers and organisations. In tacking policy decisions the cell can consult other departments or agencies.
- 2) The consumer education program should be organised and spread by government in rural areas also to developing awareness about consumer rights, consumer protection act and redressal mechanism.

### **Recommendation for consumers –**

- 1) Consumer should acquire full and correct information before buying and be more alert price, quality etc.
- 2) Consumer should effectively exercise for his rights, consumer protection act and redressal mechanism.
- 3) Consumer should organize together as consumers to develop the strength and influence to promote and protect consumer interest.
- 4) Consumer should have active role in consumerism and consumer education.

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