



A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AMONG CONSUMERS IN KANNIYA KUMARA DISTRICT

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Abstract

The consumer Protection act was enacted in 1986 to provide protection to the consumers. But even after 36 years of its enactment, the Consumer Protection Act still faces certain problems and consumer protection still remains questionable in India. One of the lacunae is the lack of awareness about their rights. Even the educated people are not fully aware about their rights as a consumer and how to protect themselves from the exploitations. The people must know about their rights and how to make them meaningful. The purposed study is an attempt to examine the level of consumer protection awareness among consumers about their rights and responsibilities. The objective of the study is to examine the consumer's demographic profile towards consumer protection awareness and to find out the problems faced by the consumers. Convenience sampling technique has been adopted to collect data from 100 respondents in Kalkulam Taluk, Kanniyakumari District. The study suggested to implement various scheme to protect consumers from adulteration and duplication. It also suggested to educate the consumers through media about consumer awareness.

Keywords: Consumer Protection, Rights, Responsibilities, Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer protection consist of laws and regulations designed to ensure the rights of consumer and fair trade competition and the free flow of truthful information in the market place. The laws are designed to prevent the business that are engaged in fraud or specified unfair practices for their advantage. Consumer protection laws are form of government regulations which aim to protect the rights of consumers and to avoid exploitation and make considered choice in availing of products and services from the market.

The Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 1986 to provide protection to the consumers. But even after 36 years of its enactment, the Consumer Protection Act still faces certain problems and consumer protection still remains questionable in India. One of the lacunae is the lack of awareness about their rights. Even the educated people are not fully aware about their rights as a consumer and how to protect themselves from the exploitations. The people must know about their rights and how to make them meaningful. Unless the awareness reaches the whole population consumerism is a myth and it will not be helpful.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rawal., (2019) examined that the current consumers perception towards marketing practices related to protection of consumer rights were low favorable and also indicated that more work has needed for improvement of awareness education.

Chaudhary., (2017) concluded that people are less aware of the movement of consumerism; therefore consumer awareness is mostly needed regarding consumer rights, responsibilities and the complaint handling machinery among people of all age groups.

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.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The consumers are not aware about their basic rights and the system exists for consumer protection, many of them are being exploited by the traders. Yet now consumers are cheated by a large number of restrictive and unfair trade practices such as spurious drugs, abuse of monopoly positions, high prices, poor quality, non-standard goods, poor after sales services etc. Poor and helpless consumers are always exploited by the unscrupulous traders, manufacturers and petty street vendors. The proposed study is an attempt to examine the level of consumer protection awareness among consumers about their rights and responsibilities among selected sample consumers in kanniya kumara District

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To examine the consumer's demographic profile towards consumer protection awareness.
- ❖ To find out the problems faced by the consumers.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The success of the consumer movement in India to an extent depends upon the level of awareness of the consumers about various aspects of consumer movements such as Consumer Protection Act 1986, consumer rights and responsibilities, various judicial mechanisms involved in the Consumer Redressal Forums. This study attempts to analyze the level of consumer awareness regarding consumer protection

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique has been adopted to collect data from 100 respondents in Kalkulam Taluk, Kanniyakumari District. Secondary data related to previous studies has been obtained from authentic source like books, magazines, websites etc. Simple percentage, Garret ranking are used in this study for analysis.

CONSUMER LAW

Consumer protection law or consumer law is considered as area of law that regulates private law relationships between individual consumers and the business that sell those goods and services. Consumer protection covers a wide range of topics, including but not necessarily limited to product liability, privacy rights. It's a way of preventing fraud and scams from sales contracts, bill collector regulation.

TYPES OF CONSUMER RIGHTS

- ❖ Right to safety
- ❖ Right to be informed
- ❖ Right to choose
- ❖ Right to be heard
- ❖ Right to seek redressal
- ❖ Right to customer education

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONSUMERS

- ❖ They should know their rights under the consumer protection act and should practice the same in case of need.
- ❖ They should have sufficient knowledge about the product they are buying. They should act as a cautious customer while purchasing any product.
- ❖ A consumer can file a complaint if a product is found to be false or not satisfactory.
- ❖ The consumer can demand a cash memo while making a purchase.
- ❖ The consumer should verify the standard mark that has been introduced for the reliability of the quality of the product like ISI or Hallmark, etc.

NEED FOR THE PROTECTION OF CONSUMER RIGHTS

Consumer need protection due to the following reasons:

- ❖ **Illiteracy and ignorance:** Consumers in India are mostly illiterate and ignorant. They do not understand their rights. A system is required to protect them from unscrupulous businessmen.
- ❖ **Unorganized consumers:** In India consumers are widely dispersed and are not united. They are at the mercy of businessmen. On the other hand, producers and traders are organized and powerful.
- ❖ **Spurious goods:** There is an increasing supply of duplicate product and its imitation. It is necessary to protect consumer from such exploitations by ensuring compliance with prescribed norms of quality and safety.
- ❖ **Deceptive advertising:** Some business man gives misleading information about quality, safety and utility of products and consumers are misled by false advertisement. A mechanism is needed to stop misleading advertisements.
- ❖ **Malpractices of businessmen:** Fraudulent, unethical and monopolistic trade practices on the part of businessmen lead to exploitation of consumers. Consumers often get inferior and substandard goods and poor service. Certain measures are required to protect the consumers against such malpractices.
- ❖ **Legitimacy for existence:** Business exists to satisfy the needs and desires of consumers. Goods are produced with the purpose of selling them. Goodwill, in the long run, sells only when they meet the needs of consumers.
- ❖ **Trusteeship:** Businessmen are trustees of the society's wealth. Therefore, they should use this wealth for the benefit of people.

CONSUMER REDRESSAL FORUM

- ❖ District Consumer Forum
- ❖ State Consumer Forum
- ❖ National Consumer Forum

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE. 1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

DEMOGRAPHIC		NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Gender	Male	27	27
	Female	73	73
Total		100	100
Age	Below 20 years	8	8
	20 - 30 years	26	26
	30 - 40 years	43	43
	Above 40 years	23	23
Total		100	100

Educational qualification	Illiterate	5	5
	School	22	22
	Graduate	45	45
	Professional degree	15	15
	Any other	13	13
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that 27 percent of the respondents are male and 73 percent of the respondents are female in the study consumer protection awareness. 8 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of below 20 years, 26 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 – 30 years, 43 percent of the respondents are belong to the age group of 30 – 40 years and 23 percent of the respondents are belong to the age group of above 40 years. 5 percent of the respondents are illiterates, 22 percent of the respondents are school students, 45 percent of the respondents are graduates, 15 percent of the respondents are have professional degree and 13 percent of the respondents are have any other qualification.

TABLE. 2
PROBLEMS FACED BY CONSUMERS

PROBLEMS	GARRET RANK MEAN SCORE	RANK
Deliver issue	61.27	I
Poor quality	45.45	IV
Adulteration	52.7	II
Misleading advertisement	39.62	V
Wrong weights and measures	48.62	III

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that the problems faced by the consumers and analysing using garret's means score. Delivery issue ranked first with the means score of 61.27, adulteration ranked second with the mean score of 52.7, wrong weights and measures ranked third with the mean score of 48.96, poor quality ranked fourth with the mean score of 45.45 and misleading advertisement ranked fifth with the mean score of 39.62.

FINDINGS

- ❖ Most of the respondents are female.
- ❖ Most of the respondents belong to the age group of 30 to 40 years.
- ❖ Majority of the respondents are graduates.
- ❖ The major problems faced by the consumer is delivery issue.

SUGGESTION

- ❖ To provide effective, efficient, inexpensive and speedy redressal system to the consumers.
- ❖ To implement various scheme to protect consumers from adulteration and duplication.
- ❖ To educate the consumers through media about consumer awareness.

CONCLUSION

The present research focused to know the awareness level of consumer towards consumer protection. Schedule has been considered as research tool for the study. It has been surveyed among the 100 respondents from Kalkulam taluk in Kanniyakumari district. The findings gave a might into the extent of consumer lack of awareness of many facts that are of much relevance for their own welfare. They should be educated and trained towards their own welfare.

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