



A Study On Consumer Awareness And Attitude Towards Consumer Protection Measures

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INTRODUCTION

Each of us is a consumer, every consumer consume different commodities and services from our birth to death. All business activities revolve around the consumer. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi (1890) "A customer is the most important visitor on our premises, he is not dependent on us. We dependent on him, he makes favour to us, not we favour on him" Today's consumer is said to be king of the market.

The form of exploitation may be looks-alike, less weight, inferior quality of goods and services and exorbitant prices. So, there is need of creating awareness in our country. Higher consumer awareness, lower the exploitation and vice versa. Consumer awareness may be defined as clearly, understanding the need and priority of purchasing, conditions and warranties of purchase agreement and rights and duties of consumer.

The consumer must be aware regarding his rights and the available legal measures against exploitation. In order to create consumer awareness and safeguarding their interest, the Government of India has enacted Prevention of food adulteration Act 1954, Standards of Weights and Measures Act 1956, Indian Standards Institution Act 1952, Essential Commodities Act 1955, Consumer Protection Act 1986 etc.

Indian consumer is a victim of exploitation in the form of sub-standard goods and services, false guarantee, exorbitant prices and fraudulent tactics. Creation of consumer awareness is a big task in our vast country. Due to some impediments such as, illiteracy, indifferent attitude, ignorance of law, lengthy legal procedures etc, and the degree of consumer awareness is very low in India.

There are number of laws, concerning the protection of consumers framed by the Government form time to time. Also, to see that justice is provided to the consumers, for which the government has setup consumer forums in all the districts.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A change in the perception of consumer attitude as regards safe guarding his right in the matters associated with consumption of a product or service is obvious in view of the legal protection granted by Government of India. The consumer protection Act 1986 guarantees the rights such as right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose, right to be heard, right to redress, right to education, and right to healthy environment and also the act expects the consumer to assert his rights and development of consumer organization. Various other measures initiated by Government of India from time to time has fold objectives via encouraging consumer to fight for his right and protect himself on the one hand and insist businessman to excise rigid self discipline on the other hand. In view of this measure it is hoped that the consumers to have affair deal and protected themselves from exploitation. But in reality it is not so. The unscrupulous sellers continue to defraud the consumers and take advantage of every situa-

tion. In this context it is believed that the consumer should be well aware of his rights granted by various legal measures. To understand the level of consumer awareness in the society the researcher has selected the related title and tries to enlighten certain facts and what extend the consumers are aware of their rights and what their attitude towards the legal measures assumes importance in the light of safeguarding the interest of the consumer and that forms as the problem of the study. Hence the research finds initiative to study the consumer awareness and attitude towards consumer protection measures.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the awareness of consumer protection association.
2. To study the awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities
3. To study the awareness of consumer protection measures.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Sampling design

The sampling technique selected for the study as simple random sampling. The respondents have been randomly selected from total population.

Sample size

The sampling size is 200. The questionnaire were systematically prepared and distributed to the consumer respondents. The respondents varied from a wide cross section of various economic and demographic characteristics.

(iii) Source of data

The data for this study has been collected from primary and secondary sources.

➤ Primary data

Primary data are those, which are collected a fresh and for the time and thus happen to be original in character. In this study the questionnaire were used for the primary data collections.

➤ Secondary data

Secondary data are those which have already been collected by some other context and which have been already processed through the statistical process. Secondary data was collected through journals, books, websites, and published data.

(iv) Statistical Tools

The following were the statistical tools applied for the analysis of data collected.

➤ Chi-Square analysis

In order to find out whether there was any significant association between two variables chi-square test was applied.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In this chapter the analysis and interpretation of the study on consumer awareness and attitude towards consumer protection measures, based on the information supplied by a sample of 200 respondents selected from total population. This chapter contains different sections namely:

- Chi-Square Analysis

Chi-Square Analysis

In this section, chi-square test is employed to identify whether there is a any significant association between the personal profile of the respondents and study factors. The quality χ^2 describes the magnitude of the discrepancy between theory and observation. It is defined as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where O refers to observed frequency and E refers to the expected frequencies. The calculated value of χ^2 compared with the table value for given degrees of freedom at a certain specified level of significant.

If the calculated value is more than the table value, the difference between theory and observation is considered to be significant, on the other hand, the difference between theory and observation is not considered as significant.

TABLE NO: 1

Table showing Gender (vs.) Attend any meeting or conference

| Attend any meeting or conference | Gender | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Regular | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| Occasionally | 17 | 37 | 54 |
| Never | 62 | 74 | 136 |
| Total | 82 | 118 | 200 |

Ho: There is no significant association between gender and attend any meeting or conference.

Result: Calculated value: 3.71

Table value : 5.991

Degrees of freedom 2 at 5% level of significance

Inference: Since the calculated value of χ^2 is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant association between Gender and attend any meeting or conferences.

TABLE NO: 2

Table showing Gender (vs.) watching or reading about Consumer Protection Programs

| Watching or reading Consumer Protection Program | Gender | | |
|---|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Yes | 64 | 72 | 136 |
| No | 15 | 46 | 64 |
| Total | 82 | 118 | 200 |

Ho: There is no significant association between gender and watching or reading about consumer protection programs

Result: Calculated value: 6.45

Table value : 3.841

Degrees of freedom 1 at 5% level of significance

Inference: Since the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the

table value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant association between Gender and watching or reading about consumer protection programs.

TABLE NO: 3

Table showing Age (vs.) Attend any meeting or conference

| Attend any meeting or conference | Age | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| | Below 20 years | 21-35 years | 36-50 years | Above 50 years | Total |
| Regular | - | 5 | 5 | - | 10 |
| Occasionally | - | 34 | 20 | - | 54 |
| Never | 24 | 65 | 19 | 28 | 136 |
| Total | 24 | 104 | 44 | 28 | 200 |

Ho: There is no significant association between age and attend any meeting or conference

Result: Calculated value: 39.3

Table value : 12.592

Degrees of freedom 6 at 5% level of significance

Inference: Since the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant association between age and attend any meeting or conference.

TABLE NO: 4

Table showings Age (vs.) Watching or Reading about Consumer Protection Program

| Watching or Reading about Consumer Protection Program | Age | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| | Below 20 years | 21-35 years | 36-50 years | Above 50 years | Total |
| Yes | 18 | 64 | 32 | 22 | 136 |
| No | 6 | 40 | 10 | 6 | 64 |
| Total | 24 | 104 | 44 | 28 | 200 |

Ho: There is no significant association between age and watching or reading about consumer protection program.

Result: Calculated value: 5.29

Table value : 7.815

Degrees of freedom 3 at 5% level of significance

Inference: Since the calculated value of χ^2 is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant association between age and watching or reading about consumer protection program.

TABLE NO: 5

Table showings Age (vs.) Reaction of consumer cheated by manufacturer or seller

| Reaction of consumer cheated by manufacturer or seller | Age | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| | Below 20 years | 21-35 years | 36-50 years | Above 50 years | Total |
| Insist that the seller not to cheat | 5 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 20 |
| Do not react | 7 | 16 | 7 | 6 | 36 |
| Replacement | 7 | 48 | 32 | 9 | 96 |

| | | | | | |
|--|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| lodge a complaint, with consumer court | 5 | 33 | 2 | 8 | 48 |
| Total | 34 | 104 | 44 | 28 | 200 |

Ho: There is no significant association between age and reaction of consumer cheated by manufacturer or seller

Result: Calculated value: 27.2

Table value : 16.919

Degrees of freedom 9 at 5% level of significance

Inference: Since the calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant association between age and reaction of consumer cheated by manufacturer or seller.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Findings of chi square test

- There is no significant association between Gender and attend any meeting or conferences.
- There is a significant association between Gender and watching or reading about consumer protection programs.
- There is a significant association between age and attend any meeting or conference.
- There is no significant association between age and watching or reading about consumer protection program.
- There is a significant association between age and reaction of consumer cheated by manufacturer or seller.

SUGGESTIONS

The suggestions based on the results of the study and the opinion given by the respondents with during the conduct of the study are presented in the following pages.

1. Providing consumer awareness programs to the public

Government at the centre and state should feel the necessity of consumer awareness programs and consumer education to the public.

2. Consumer education in schools and colleges

Government should include consumer education in the curric-

ulum of schools and colleges. This will help in creating awareness about consumer protection laws amongst the public.

3. Establishment of voluntary consumer organizations

Government should also provide necessary encouragement for establishment and functioning of voluntary consumer organisations. In fact, in the fields like consumer education, consumer redressal etc., voluntary consumer organizations can contribute more than the governmental agencies.

4. Telecast consumer awareness programs through media

The DoorDarshan and all India Radio should telecast consumer awareness programs more frequently. These are the best media to create more awareness among illiterate consumer of rural and urban areas. Government should also take up possible measures insist/motivate television network to telecast more number of consumer awareness programs.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that consumer protection measures are not aware to general public because of lack of proper communications. So in this context it is necessary to say that information should reach that each and every individual consumer. It further reveals that government brings out lot of measures to protect consumer, but the consumer are not using it properly. On the part of the sellers they still remain as dominators of the market even though many laws come to protect consumers. So it could be said as co-operative efforts on the part of consumers, business and the government is necessary to protect consumers. A well organized consumerism makes the government responsive and effective and also for a sincere and dynamic business enterprise. Consumerism is not going to be a threat but only a better opportunity for better business. However consumer awareness through consumer education and actions by the government, consumer activists, and association are needed the most to make consumer movement a success in the country.