



AN INVESTIGATION OF LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS AMONG RURAL WOMEN IN COIMBATORE PROVINCE

KEYWORDS

Consumer Awareness, Consumer Rights, Rural Consumers, Women Consumers

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ABSTRACT Rural population is always busy with their day to day activities; they did not find the time to know about their rights. There are backbone of Indian economy the most of the market. But, as a consumer, the rural people do not have much awareness of their basic whites. Hence, there is an urgent need for conduct a study to know about their level of awareness towards their rights and responsibilities. This study is focus on women consumers' awareness level in rural areas of Coimbatore. This study results shows that the Educational qualification and economic status of the woman's is one of the important factor for determining the level of consumer awareness among women in the study area.

Introduction

India is one of the biggest rural consumer markets in the world. Indian market have been witnessing several changes following on towards globalization, liberalization and privatization and a large scale entry of multinational company is a major outcomes of new economic order. Through the reference from various published research articles regarding consumer protection awareness among rural consumer, a consumer are vital values of man, they are not depends of producer or seller, the producer and seller depends only a consumer, the consumer are the boss of business and the producer or business man is the server of the consumer.

Need for the Study

In India more than 76 per cent of the people are living in villages. The development of India depends on development of villages and that is possible only through the growth of agriculture and its allied activities. Rural population is always busy with their day to day activities; they did not find the time to know about their rights. There are backbone of Indian economy the most of the market. But, as a consumer, the rural people do not have much awareness of their basic whites. Hence, there is an urgent need for conduct a study to know about their level of awareness towards their rights and responsibilities.

The need for empowerment of consumers as a class cannot overemphasized and is already well recognized all over the world. The level of awareness of the consumer can be taken as an indicator of the progress of a country. With liberalization and globalization and greater thrust towards privatization accompanied with heightened awareness on account of increased availability of information and media exposure today's consumer has changed radically. However, in spite of best efforts during the course of consumption a consumer may encounter many problems. This study is focus on women consumers' awareness level in rural areas of Coimbatore.

In spite of various provisions providing protection to the consumer and providing for stringent action against adulterated and sub-standard articles in the different enactments like Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Indian Contract Act, 1872, the Sale of Goods Act, 1930, the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Standards of Weights and Measures

Act, 1976 and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, very little could be achieved in the field of Consumer Protection. Though the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 and the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 have provided relief to the consumers yet it became necessary to protect the consumers from the exploitation and to save them from adulterated and sub-standard goods and services and to safe guard the interests of the consumers. In order to provide for better protection of the interests of the consumer the Consumer Protection Bill, .1986 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 5th December, 1986.

Saravanan, S. (2011). Various measures to safeguard the consumer interest through legislation have been taken by government of India. Some of them are Essential Commodities Act 1955, Agricultural Products (Grading and Marketing) Act 1937, Drugs Act 1940, Drugs Control Act 1954, Standards Institutional Certification Marks Act 1952, Prevention of food Adulteration Act 1954, Standards weight and Measures Act 1956, Consumer Protection Act 1986, etc. But lack of awareness about the redressal machineries, their own rights and responsibilities as a consumer is some of the major problems among the Indian consumers. However, with specific reference to women consumers, they are ignorant and unaware of consumer protection and welfare acts and programmes. The study shows that majority of the rural women consumer were highly not aware of the various consumer protection acts.

Unless the consumers are aware of the constitutional provisions by government to protect the rights or the consumers', the effort of the government and voluntary organizations cannot achieve the desired result (Parameshvar, 1988). So consumer education is focused upon these days. Consumer education not only enhances skill or homemaker in better management of resources (Bonner, 1992) but also keeps them alert from being cheated by shopkeepers, vendors etc.

Objectives of the study

- To know the consumer awareness level among the rural consumers.
- To identify the sources of information for creating consumer awareness.

- To understand the Impact of socio-economic factors on consumer awareness.

Data Collection

Interview schedule was personally administered by the investigator to collect data. The purpose of the study and the importance of their genuineness in answering were explained. Data collection was started only after establishing personal rapport with the respondents. Respondents were asked in their vernacular language (Tamil) for understanding and to ensure correct information. In order to study the stated objectives both primary and secondary data were collected.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected relating to consumer awareness wherever needed from sources of bulletins, journals, magazine, newspaper, previous research records and e-sources also.

Primary data

Primary data were collected through structured schedule. This was used to collect information from the rural respondents regarding their awareness level of consumer legal rights.

Data Analysis

The primary data collected were analyzed to test the hypothesis. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The socio-demographic profiles of the respondents were also recorded on the parameters such as gender, age, education level, occupation and household income. The independent variables identified were socio economic factors such as, income, education, age, and gender where compared with the study variables. Simple data analysis techniques were adopted such as descriptive statistics; cross tabulation and chi-square test.

Limitations

Any research work is bound to have a few limitations due to some external uncontrollable factors. Limitations of this study are stated below.

The respondents of this study belong to rural areas and the sample size is 75 that too taken from Coimbatore district. Generalizing the results of this study outside Coimbatore district is a question to ponder. The common limitation applicable to schedule is applicable here also.

Table Showing Personal Profile of the Women Consumers

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 25 Years	46	36.8
25- 35 Years	29	23.2
Above 35 Years	50	40
Total	125	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	85	68
Un married	40	32
Total	125	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Secondary Level	23	18.4
Higher secondary Level	36	28.8

Graduate	30	24
Post Graduate	15	12
Illiterates	21	16.8
Total	125	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Working	31	24.8
Not working	78	62.4
Business	16	12.8
Total	125	100
Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent
Below Rs 5000	46	36.8
Rs 5000-10000	52	41.6
Above Rs 10000	27	21.6
Total	125	100
Family Type	Frequency	Percent
Nuclear Family	96	76.8
Joint Family	29	23.2
Total	125	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that Majority of the women consumers (40 %) in the study area are Above 35 Years of age, 68 % of respondents are got married, 28.8 % of the consumers only having Higher secondary Level of education, 68.4 % of the women consumers are only home makers not having any occupation, 41.6 % consumers Monthly Income is between Rs 5000 and Rs.10000, Majority of women consumers (76.8 %) are Nuclear Family category.

Table Showing Level of Consumer Protection Awareness about Mass Medias

Descriptive Statistics				
Variables	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Television	125	306	2.45	0.818
Newspapers	125	181	1.45	0.712
Radio	125	219	1.75	0.820
Journal	125	166	1.33	0.632
Pamphlets	125	177	1.42	0.720
Magazines	125	168	1.34	0.661
Internet	125	177	1.42	0.743
Outdoor advertisement	125	181	1.45	0.641

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that majority of the women consumers aware about Consumer Protection Awareness programmes in Television and next radio plays a vital role in disseminating the information about consumer protections and consumer rights. Newspapers and Outdoor advertisement occupy third position in giving information about consumer protections among women consumers in the study area.

One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

This section discusses about the relationship between personal profiles of women consumers in the study area and level of consumer awareness about Consumer Organizations.

Ho: There is no significance between personal profiles of women consumers and level of consumer awareness about Consumer Organizations.

Table Showing Analysis of Variance of Personal Profiles and Level of Consumer Awareness about Consumer Organizations

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Result
Age	Between Groups	8.37	4	2.09	2.87	0.03	Significant
	Within Groups	87.50	120	0.73			
	Total	95.87	124				
Marital Status	Between Groups	1.15	4	0.29	1.33	0.26	Not Significant
	Within Groups	26.05	120	0.22			
	Total	27.20	124				
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	11.93	4	2.98	1.70	0.15	Not Significant
	Within Groups	210.07	120	1.75			
	Total	222.00	124				
Occupation	Between Groups	2.68	4	0.67	1.89	0.12	Not Significant
	Within Groups	42.52	120	0.35			
	Total	45.20	124				
Monthly Income	Between Groups	4.41	4	1.10	2.01	0.10	Not Significant
	Within Groups	65.71	120	0.55			
	Total	70.11	124				
Family Type	Between Groups	1.05	4	0.26	1.48	0.21	Not Significant
	Within Groups	21.22	120	0.18			
	Total	22.27	124				

Source: Primary Data

The p value (0.03) is less than 0.05 hence there is a statistically significant difference between age and Level of Consumer Awareness about Consumer Organizations and all other variables the p value is greater than 0.05 hence other personal variables like Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Monthly Income and Family Type is no statistically significant difference between Consumer Awareness.

Findings of the study

Majority of the respondents are having only high school level education and low level of awareness about various consumer protection acts and other consumer protection measures. Most of the respondents are expressed that the mass media like TV, Radio and Newspaper are the most important sources for creating consumer protection awareness. Whereas Journals and Magazine are the least sources among the rural respondents for making consumer protection awareness. Moreover, outdoor advertisements are also having the some impact on consumer protection awareness.

Conclusion

The present research focused to know the awareness level of rural consumer towards consumer protection. Schedule has been considered as research tool for the study. It has been surveyed among the 125 rural respondents from Coimbatore district rural villages on the basis of random samples techniques. The collected data are coded and analyzed with appropriate statistical tools. Rural respondents are lacking with consumer awareness factors and other consumer welfare measures. They should be educated and trained towards these aspects for their betterment.

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