

A Study on Consumer Awareness on Consumer Protection Council – A Special Reference to Coimbatore District



Corporate Law

KEYWORDS: Consumer, Awareness, Consumer Protection Council.

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ABSTRACT

The Consumer Protection Council is the apex consumer protection agency of the Federal Government of India established to promote and protect consumers' interests. Its core activities are: to inform consumers; to eliminate hazardous products from the market and ensure that products and services comply with required standards and to receive, mediate and provide redress to consumer complaints. According to the CPC, it would achieve success 'when consumers can be described as well protected, getting their money's worth, knowledgeable about the market place and its mechanisms, vigilant about what takes place in it, assertive about their rights and conscious of their responsibilities'. The study is focus on analyzing the level of awareness and the extent of utilization of Consumer Protection Council.

INTRODUCTION

India is a vast country where a majority of consumer is poor, helpless and disorganized. Further the market in India is generally a seller's market and it is very easy to deceive to the innocent consumers who seem to be neither knowledgeable nor well informed. The consumer needs support and protection from the unscrupulous seller. A common consumer is not in a position to approach a civil court for acquiring and an affordable speedy justice against his complaints. In order to tackle this, the government has lent its hands in a different way. The Central Government enacted a law in the year 1986 for the protection and welfare of consumers. Consumer's Protection Council is a social movement which seeks to protect and augment the rights of the consumer relation to the product and service.

In India, a large percentage of the population belongs to the illiterate class with concentrated efforts of voluntary consumer associations and activities, which can transform this movement as people's movement. the objective can be achieved only if there is co-ordination between the various consumer organizations at the local, state, national, as well as the international level. The Consumer Protection Act provides an opportunity to the consumer to approach court if there is any lapse in the quality product or services. So the Act provides a different level of Consumer's Forum at the district level is called District Consumer Forum. While at the State Level it is called State Commission and all India forum is known as National Commission for consumer welfare.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India is a country where 76.4% of the population resides in more than 6,27,000 villages. Apart from that there are people of different religions with different customers, traditions and languages also. there is a wide disparity between the levels of income of the people and their life style. In this situation it needs much effort to practice consumerism in India. Consumerisms in urban areas are in better position where as rural people are not even aware of their rights and other benefits extended to them. In fact laws to control and punish business involving in adulteration and have been in existence in India. Since government has been implementing these laws to protect the consumer and stringent punishment are being given for adulteration of food grains and oil in India.

But the remedy for the situation is not legislation only. More importantly it is the Consumer who is not only aware of this situation but also actively seeks the means of redressing the plight the consumers in India in general have not been showing enough interest in involving themselves in the consumer movement. Lack of proper education and rational thinking and no sense of social responsibility on their part are among the lead-

ing causes. Thus a study carried out in Coimbatore district with the basic purpose of analyzing the level of awareness and the extent of utilization of consumer Protection Council.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the conceptual framework of Consumerism and Consumer Protection Council
2. To evaluate the performance of Consumer Protection Council in Coimbatore District.
3. to identify the factors influencing consumer to utilization of Consumer Protection Council
4. to identify the common problems faced by the consumer in the study area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design here used is descriptive research. In this, the researcher has no control over the variables. Convenient sampling technique was followed to collect data of this study. The technique used for the research is Non-Probability Sampling because the population is infinite. There are 125 respondents from different parts of Coimbatore District which consists of urban and semi-urban centers that were taken as samples.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The collected data was classified, tabulated and analyzed with using simple statistical tools like Percentage Analysis, Chi Square Test, Score Value Analysis, Weighted Mean and ANOVA.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No.1 Respondents Awareness on Consumer Rights

Sl. No.	Awareness	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	102	82%
2.	No	23	18%
Total		125	100%

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that majority (82%) of the respondents' are aware about the consumer rights and 18% of the respondents are not aware about the consumer rights. majority (82%) of the respondents' are aware about the consumer rights.

Table No.2 Reasons for Poor Registration of Consumer Cases

Sl. No.	Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Too much of procedure	45	36%
2.	Basically fear of Court	20	16%

3.	Time consuming	17	14%
4.	Expensive Act	11	9%
5.	Insecurity	32	26%
	Total	125	100%

Source: Primary Data

It is concluded from the above table that 36% of the respondents felt too much of procedures as the reasons for poor registration of consumer cases, 26% of the respondents reported insecurity reasons, 16% of the respondents opined basically fear of court, 14% of the respondents expressed time consuming and the remaining 9% of the respondents stated expensive act as the reasons for poor registration of consumer cases.

Table No.3 Level of Education and Media of Awareness about Consumer Protection Act

Level of Education of the Respondents	Media of Awareness about Consumer Protection Act					Total
	Electronic Media	Press Media	Voluntary Consumer Organization	Advocates	Others	
Illiterate	7	10	3	3	3	26
	12.3	4.2	2.7	3.3	3.5	26.0
School Level	7	0	0	0	0	7
	3.3	1.1	.7	.9	1.0	7.0
Primary Level	30	3	6	13	6	58
	27.4	9.3	6.0	7.4	7.9	58.0
Graduate Level	15	7	4	0	8	34
	16.0	5.4	3.5	4.4	4.6	34.0
Total	59	20	13	16	17	125
	59.0	20.0	13.0	16.0	17.0	125.0

Chi-Square Value : 34.975**Degree of Freedom :12****Table Value : 21.026****Result : Significant**

It is clear from the above table that the calculated Chi-square value (34.975) is more than the table value (21.026) and the result is significant at 5% level. Hence, the hypothesis "Level of

Education and Media of Awareness about Consumer Protection Act" holds good. From the above analysis, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between the Level of Education and Media of Awareness about Consumer Protection Act.

FINDINGS

- maximum (33%) of the respondents belong to the age group from 30 to 35 years
- most (65%) of the respondents are male
- most (61%) of the respondents are married
- few (35%) of the respondents are residing at rural areas
- 34% of the respondents are graduates
- all (100%) of the respondents are aware about consumer protection act.
- all (100%) of the respondents are aware about consumer rights.
- majority (72%) of the respondents opined as within 20 lakhs as maximum claim amount during loss
- majority (73%) of the respondents accept that the consumer court activities work properly
- majority (85%) of the respondents had knowledge about filing the complaint on plain paper
- majority (82%) of the respondents are rightly aware about the no fee payment needed while filing complaint
- 41% of the respondents are dissatisfied due to laws are not properly implemented by the authorities

SUGGESTIONS

- few of the members are non members of consumer protection council; this is due to lack of knowledge and poor awareness about the necessity of becoming the members of the consumer council. Government and private unions' initiative is a must to inculcate the general public.
- Few of the respondents stated that they have faced problems related to the consumer interest which needs to be addressed and earn the trust of the consumers.
- Few of the respondents feel that the consumer court activities are not working properly. Therefore, the government shall take stringent measures to overcome this issue.
- Many of the respondent's complaint about time consuming as the reasons for poor registration of consumer cases. All these issues may be addressed by the government and shall help the public feel secured and finish any case on time without too much procedure and expenses.

CONCLUSION

India is vast country with a large percentage of the population belonging to the illiterate class Coimbatore district with the basic purpose of analyzing critically the level of awareness and the extent utilization of consumer Protection Council. A common consumer is not in a position to approach a civil court quick, cheap, and speedy justice to his complaints is required the biggest help in this direction has come from the government. Hence, the people in the voluntary organization work with a spirit of dedication and fight for a common cause. The study concludes that many of the consumers have fear about the court, procedures, etc. However, the government shall take initiatives to infuse knowledge among the public irrespective of their educational background, gender, economic status, etc. will help them to reach for their rights that will help the public feel their democracy in India.

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