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CONSUMER AWARENESS ON PROTECTION MEASURES –A STUDY ON SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANNUR TOWN (COIMBATORE DISTRICT)

KEY WORDS: Consumer Awareness, Consumer Protection.

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ABSTRACT

The present study has a good deal of relevance in the present context i.e. increasing income levels, changing consumption patterns, globalization of Indian markets etc. It is the need of hour to enhance consumer awareness and impart consumer education in our country wherein there are more than 35 crore illiterate people and indifferent attitude prevails in the society towards consumer protection. Even educated people are not aware about their right as consumers and prevalent laws protecting the interests of the consumers. The present study is an attempt to probe into the awareness of the consumers, their reactions regarding service providing agencies and make some possible suggestions in order to overcome the problems.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that consumer is a backbone of all economic activities; therefore his interest should receive first priority. But today Indian consumer is one of the most neglected sections of the society. He faces a plethora of problems affecting his rights and interests. He is very often cheated in a number of ways such as, adulteration, over pricing, short weights and measures, fraudulent advertisements, deceptive packaging, black marketing and poor sales services.

Fortunately, consumer protection is now a widely accepted phenomenon in the country. A number of legal and institutional arrangements developed over the years directly or indirectly aim at safeguarding the interest of consumers. Further, the Government has brought into effect a progressive and comprehensive legislation in the form of Consumer Protection Act, 1986. This Act covers the goods and services produced by private, public, joint and cooperative sector. To protect and promote consumers rights, the Act envisages the formation of consumer protection councils at the central and state levels. The Act also envisages setting up of a Directorate of consumer protection to receive consumer complaints and consumer disputes redressed forum to deal with consumers' disputes.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Asha Nagendra (1994) in her study entitled "Consumerism How enlightened in the Indian consumers" has undertaken a study among 200 consumers to assess the awareness of consumers regarding the various legislative and judicial provisions available for their protection and concludes that majority of the consumers are ignorant of the Governments efforts towards consumer protection.

Bhajantri P.D. (1998) has highlighted on the "consumerism and consumer protection act-1986" he has indicated the nine rights of consumer he analyses the causes and way of exploitation and finally concludes that consumer awareness is essential for the success of consumer protection and movement as delay is dangerous to each and every one. The effort should be taken to protect consumer and to ensure consumer protection a four pronged strategy has to be adopted.

Nageswara Rao (2002) state that 460 million people in the country is uneducated. So education is a must to gain the knowledge of consumer rights. Due to low literate level the awareness of consumer's rights has not reached to a desirable level. The consumer is still victim of the market forces. He concludes that the consumers have to protect themselves through powerful consumer movement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

With as view to find out the solutions for the questions raised above, the following objectives have been framed

1. To examine the awareness of consumers on their right.
2. To find out the level of knowledge of consumer on their duties.
3. To ascertain the level of awareness of consumers on complaining procedures.
4. To suggest suitable ways to improve the level of awareness of consumers about their right, duties, complaining procedure etc.,

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to Annur town, a taluks head quarter of Coimbatore district. The both primary and secondary data have been used for the present study. Primary data was collected through questionnaires issued to consumers. The questionnaires contains questions relating to socio economic profile of the consumers, their knowledge about consumer rights, consumer duties, knowledge about complaining procedure.

For the purpose of the study, a sample of 50 consumers living in Annur town was selected on simple random sampling basis.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

TABLE NO-1 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	GENDER	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Male	37	74.0
2	Female	13	26.0
	TOTAL	50	100

From the above table it is clear that out of the total respondents 74.0 percentages of respondents are Male and 26.0 percentages of respondents are Female. Majority of respondents are Male.

TABLE NO-2 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.NO.	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Up to Graduation	32	64.0
2	Post Graduation & Professional	7	14.0
3	Technical & Others	11	22.0
	TOTAL	50	100

The above table reveals that out of the total respondents 64.0 percentage of the respondents have completed their up to graduate, 14.0 percentage of the respondents are post graduation & professional, 22.0 percentage of the respondents are technical & Others.

Majority of respondents have completed their education up to graduate level.

TABLE NO-3 OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

S.NO.	OCCUPATIONAL STATUS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Employee	20	40.0
2	Professional	7	14.0
3	Business & Others	23	46.0
	TOTAL	50	100

It could be seen from the above table that out of the total number of respondents 46.0 percentages of the respondents are Business & Other (Students, Housewife and Retired people) 40.0 percentage of the respondents are employed and 14.0 percentage of the respondents are professionals.

Majority of respondents are business and others.

TABLE NO-4 MONTHLY INCOME

S.NO.	MONTHLY INCOME	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Up to Rs. 7000	29	58.0
2	Rs.7000- 15,000	15	30.0
3	Above Rs.15,000	6	12.0
	TOTAL	50	100

The above table presents the family monthly income of the respondents out of the total number of respondents 58.0 percentages of the respondents have family monthly income between up to Rs. 7000, 30 percentage of the respondents have family monthly income between Rs. 7000-15000, 12.0 percentage of the respondents have family monthly income above Rs. 15000.

Majority of respondents have family monthly income up to Rs.7000.

TABLE NO-5 AWARENESS ON CONSUMER DUTIES

S. NO.	DUTIES	ALWAYS		OCCASIONAL		NEVER	
		No of Respondents	%	No of Respondents	%	No of Respondents	%
1	Check the ISI mark while purchasing	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
2	Demand a bill for the goods purchased	41	82.0	8	16.0	1	2.0
3	Check the bill	46	92.0	4	8.0	0	-
4	Demand a warranty card, if necessary.	43	86.0	6	12.0	1	2.0

From the above table clear those 90.0 percentages of respondent check the ISI Mark while purchasing, 82.0 percentages of respondent demand a bill for the goods purchased, 92.0 percentages of respondent check the bill, 86 percentage of respondent demand a warranty card.

Majority of respondent check the ISI Mark, Demand a bill, Check the bill, Demand a warranty card.

TABLE NO-6 AWARENESS ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

S. NO.	RIGHTS	HIGHLY AWARE		AWARE		NOT AWARE	
		No of Respondents	%	No of Respondents	%	No of Respondents	%

1	Right to safety	17	34.0	31	62.0	2	4.0
2	Right to be informed	10	20.0	35	70.0	5	10.0
3	Right to choose	12	24.0	30	60.0	8	16.0
4	Right to be heard	13	26.0	23	46.0	14	28.0
5	Right to seek redressed	8	16.0	20	40.0	22	44.0
6	Right to consumer education	8	16.0	12	24.0	30	60.0

It is found from the table it is clear that out of 50 respondents 62.0 percentage aware on right to safety, 70.0 percentage aware on right to be informed, 60.0 percentage aware on right to choose, 46.0 percentage aware on right to be heard, and 44.0 percentage not aware on right to seek redressed, 60.0 percentage not aware on right to consumer education.

Majority of respondents are considered aware on right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose, right to be heard and not aware on right to seek redressed and consumer education.

TABLE NO-7 AWARENESS ON PLACE TO FILE A COMPLAINT

S. NO.	PLACE TO FILE A COMPLAINT	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Yes	17	34.0
2	No	33	66.0
	TOTAL	50	100

From the above table clear that 66.0 percentage of respondents are not aware on place to file a complaint, 34.0 percentages of respondents are aware on place to file a complaint.

Majority of respondents are not aware on place to file a complaint.

TABLE NO-8 KNOWLEDGE ON LOCATION OF CONSUMER COURT

S. NO.	CONSUMER COURT	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Yes	19	38.0
2	No	31	62.0
	TOTAL	50	100

From the above table clear that 62.0 percentages of respondents are not aware on location of consumer court, 38.0 percentages of respondents are aware on location of consumer court.

Majority of respondents are not aware on location of consumer court.

TABLE NO-9 FILING COMPLAINTS ON THE DEFECTS OF GOODS PURCHASED

S. NO.	FILING COMPLAINTS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Yes	4	8.0
2	No	46	92.0
	TOTAL	50	100

From the above table clear that 92.0 percentage of respondents are not aware on filing complaints on the defects of goods purchased, only 8.0 percentages of respondents aware on filing complaints on the defects of goods purchased. Majority of respondents are not aware on filing complaints on the defects of goods purchased.

TABLE NO-10 REASON FOR NOT FILE A COMPLAINT IN THE COURT

S. NO.	REASON FOR NOT FILE A COMPLAINT	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Lack of time	14	28.0
2	Not interested	9	18.0
3	Unaware of consumer council	15	30.0
4	Delay in time	5	10.0
5	Not interested in going to court	7	14.0
	TOTAL	50	100

From the above table it is clear that 30.0 percentage of respondents reason for filed a complaint in the court is that they are not aware of consumer council, 28.0 percentage of respondents do not have time for file a complaint, 14.0 percentage of respondents do not have interest in going to court, 18.0 percentage of respondents do not have interest, 10.0 percentage of respondents reason is delay in time.

Majority of respondent's reason for not file a complaint in the court is that they are not aware of consumer court.

FINDINGS

- 74.0 percentages of respondents are Male.
- 64.0 percentages of respondents have completed their education up to graduate level.
- 46.0 percentages of the respondents are Business & Others.
- 58.0 percentages of the respondents have family monthly income between up to Rs.7000.
- Out of the total number of respondents, 90.0 percentages of respondent check the ISI Mark while purchasing, 82.0 percentages of respondent demand a bill for the goods purchased, 92.0 percentages of respondent check the bill, 86 percentage of respondent demand a warranty card.
- Out of the total number of respondents, 62.0 percentage aware on right to safety, 70.0 percentage aware on right to be informed, 60.0 percentage aware on right to choose, 46.0 percentage aware on right to be heard, and 44.0 percentage not aware on right to seek redressed, 60.0 percentage not aware on right to consumer education.
- 66.0 percentages of respondents are not aware on place to file a complaint.
- 62.0 percentages of respondents are not aware on location of consumer court.
- 92.0 percentages of respondents are not aware on filing complaints on the defects of goods purchased.
- 30.0 percentage of respondents' reason for filed a complaint in the court is that they are not aware of consumer council.

CONCLUSION

The Government is also making efforts with the help of certain departments, voluntary organizations and media, to educate the general consumer regarding their rights as a consumer. The Government departments and organizations usually hold talks, exhibitions, seminars, workshops and open discussion with the consumers giving them useful recommendations to increase their awareness for accurate buying policies. The printed media viz. newspapers, academic journals, magazines etc. often carry information which if properly noted could increase the consumer awareness.

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