
CONSUMER AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

Consumers are the largest economic group in any country. They are the central point of all economic activities. The ultimate aim of production, storage and distribution is to ensure consumption of goods and services to the satisfaction of the consumers. Consumer awareness means being conscious of having knowledge about the various consumer production laws, redress mechanism and the consumer rights which include right to protection of health and safety from goods and services that the consumer buy, right to be informed about the quality, price, potency, purity and standard of good, right to choose the best from a variety of others, right to get representation if there is any grievance or suggestion, and right to seek redress against unfair trade practice or unscrupulous exploitation. The Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 1986 to protect the consumers from unfair trade practices. There are certain rights provided to every consumer by the Consumer Protection Act. Every consumer must be aware of the consumer rights and responsibilities

Key words- Consumer, Awareness

INTRODUCTION:

Consumer is that the one that hires or avails of any services for a thought that has been paid and partially secure or beneath any system of payment. However client exploitation is extremely rampant recently. Shoppers get exploited in many ways through the lot of dominating and knowledgeable sources. On the opposite hand, shoppers need to bear in mind not solely of the business sides of sale and got of products however additionally of the health and security aspect. Besides this, they must bear in mind of their rights and duties being as rational citizenry viz., value and the quality of product utilized, concerning truthful value outlets, standardization of product, concerning client Forums etc.

Therefore, client exploitation ought to be bought down with correct to the shoppers on their rights and the way they may move with things, if they feel they need been cheated. In the globalization, relief and privatization era, most of the economic choices are taken by the market. Though, the government has withdrawn itself from several economic activities, it interferes fairly often once the market mechanism fails thanks to structural rigidities within the economy and different factors, to give product and services to the folks. Consumption is one of the necessary economic activities, which needs regular government intervention, as market is unable to push security and welfare aspects of the shoppers. On the opposite hand, shoppers need to bear in mind not solely of the business sides of sale and get of products however additionally of the health and security aspect additionally. Besides this, they must bear in mind of their rights and duties being as rational citizenry.

CONSUMER RIGHTS:

The best place to start off is to discuss the first four basic rights that JFK helped to bring about for consumers. Before consumers had these rights, businesses had little to no responsibility when it came to hearing and compensating for customers' complaints about their products.

THE RIGHT TO SAFETY:

This right refers to any product, other than an automobile, that may cause bodily harm to the consumer when used as it was intended to be used. This right gained further attention in 1972,

when the US government formed the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which set up safety and performance standards for products, requiring them to be tested and carry warning labels if necessary. Conversely, the consumer's responsibility here is to use the product safely, follow all directions, and to be aware of any future warnings regarding the product.

THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED:

Here, it is the company's responsibility to provide accurate and truthful information so that the consumer is able to make intelligent and informed choices. This right covers all products, but its original aim was to eradicate misleading information in the areas of financing, advertising, labelling, and packaging. Some examples of the legislation passed as a result of this right include the Wholesome Meat Act, the Truth in Lending Act, and the Fair Packaging and Labelling Act. The responsibility of the consumer lies in their obligation to analyze this product information, and to use it wisely.

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE:

Consumers not only have the right to a variety of options to choose from, but the environment in which the products and services are offered must be healthy, and conducive to fair competition. The government has promoted this environment by passing legislation regarding patent law, anti-trusts, and price-cutting and gouging. The responsibility of the consumer is to simply make their choices carefully.

THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD:

Consumers have the right to express their complaints and concerns, resulting not only in safer goods and services, but also for the creation of laws regarding this safety. There's no official forum for these complaints to be heard, but state and federal attorney generals, as well as organizations like the Better Business Bureau deal with these situations all of the time. It's a consumer's responsibility to express their concern when necessary.

THE RIGHT TO SATISFY BASIC NEEDS:

People have a right to have access to basic fundamental needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, sanitation, water, etc. Not only should consumers have access to these necessities, they should be responsible enough to consume these items sustainably, so that not only are they fulfilled, but so others can have their needs met, as well.

THE RIGHT TO REDRESS:

If a consumer has lost money or otherwise felt cheated due to misrepresentation, shoddy products, or unsatisfactory services, they have the right to request money or other benefits to make up for their loss. The responsibility that lies with them is to seek appropriate compensation if a wrong is committed, in order to any wrongdoings are unacceptable.

THE RIGHT TO CONSUMER EDUCATION:

Consumers have the right to make the best-informed decision when making a purchase and this information should be readily available, and easy to understand. It is their duty to remain properly informed as the nature of products evolves over time and information changes.

THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT:

Expanding out from consumers rights, and into basic human rights, people have the right to live and work in an environment that is healthy non-threatening. This is not only for the people now, but also for future generations, and their responsibility is to make choices that minimize their environmental impact on the people of today and tomorrow.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

Consumer awareness means being conscious of and having knowledge about the various consumer protection laws, redress mechanism and the consumer which include rights to protection of health

and safety from goods and services that the consumers buy; right to be informed about quality, quantity, price, potency, purity, and standard of goods; right to choose the best from a variety of offers, right to consumer education; right to get representation if there is any grievance or suggestion, and right to seek redress against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers. This study of consumer awareness is the study of how individuals make decision on spending their available resource of money, time and effort on consumption-related items.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To review the existing Consumer Rights and Protection framework in India.
- To analyze the awareness level of consumers towards consumer rights.
- To offer valuable suggestions to improve the awareness level based on the findings of the study.

EXISTING CONSUMER RIGHTS AND PROTECTION FRAMEWORK IN INDIA:

One of the most important milestones in the area of consumer protection/consumer movement in the country has been the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. It was a progressive and comprehensive piece of legislation of its time, covering all goods and services. The Act ensures the rights of consumer for safety, information, choice, representation, and redressal and consumer education, and provides for a simple, speedy and inexpensive redressal to the consumers' in the nature of a specific nature and also awards compensation, wherever appropriate, to the consumer. An exclusive three tier redressal machinery as an alternative to the civil court and other legal remedies available in the country has been established under the Act, wherein an aggrieved consumer can seek redressal against any defect in the goods purchased or deficiencies in services availed, including restrictive/unfair trade practices adopted by such manufacturer and trader of goods/service provider. In the past thirty years more than 4.3 million consumer cases were adjudicated and decided by the consumer form.

SECTORAL LAWS PROTECTING CONSUMERS IN INDIA:

Besides the Consumer Protection Act 1986, various laws and Regulations in India protect the interests of consumers, some of which are:

THE BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARD ACT 2016:

The Bureau of Indian Standards Act 2016 establishes Bureau of Indian Standards because the National Standards Body of India. Besides containing provisions for establishing voluntary standards, the Act additionally contains provisions to bring beneath required certification regime any article, method or service that it considers necessary from purpose of read of health, safety, surroundings, bar of deceptive practices, security sanctioning provisions additionally have been created for creating hallmarking of the dear metal articles necessary. The act permits multiple verities of conformity assessment schemes, together with self declaration of conformity against any common place that provides simplified choices to makers to stick to the standards and obtain certificate of conformity. It permits the Central Government to appoint any authority, additionally to the Bureau of Indian Standards, to verify the conformity of merchandise and services to a regular and issue certificate of conformity.

THE LEGAL SCIENCE ACT 2009:

The Act has acquired force on 01.04.2011 and has repealed the Standards of Weights & Measures Act, 1976 and Standards of Weights & Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1985. The govt. ensures through the Act that each one weight and live used for trade or commerce or for defence of human health and safety area unit correct and reliable so users area unit secure for proper activity.

THE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT 1955-:

The Act empowers the govt to control costs, production, supply, distribution etc. of essential commodities for maintaining or increasing provides and for securing their just distribution and

handiness at honest costs. Most of the powers beneath the act are delegated by the Central Government to the State Governments with the direction that they shall exercise these powers.

THE FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS ACT, 2006:

The Act envisages regulation of manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import of food to confirm handiness of safe and wholesome food for human consumption and for customers connected with that. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established beneath this Act for birthing down scientific standards for articles of foods and to control their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to confirm handiness of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

THE CONTRACT ACT 1872:

The Act binds folks on their guarantees created during a contract. The Act additionally provides remedies accessible to parties just in case of breach of contract.

THE SALE OF GOODS ACT 1930:

The act provides safeguard and relief to customers just in case merchandise doesn't seem to be obliging with the expressed conditions and guarantee.

THE COMPETITION ACT, 2002:

The Act governs Indian competition law. It replaced the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 below this legislation; the Competition Commission of Republic of India country nation was established to forestall the activities that have associate degree adverse impact on competition in India. It's a tool to implement and enforce competition policy and to forestall and penalize anti-competitive business practices by corporations and unessential's Government interference within the market. Competition law is equally applicable on written similarly as oral agreement, arrangements between the enterprises or persons.

THE DRUGS AND MAGIC REMEDIES (OBJECTIONABLE ADVERTISEMENTS) ACT, 1954-:

The Act controls advertising of medicine in Asian nation. It prohibits advertisements of medicine and remedies that claim to own sorceries properties, and makes doing thus a knowable offence. The act defines 'magic remedy' as any charm, mantra, charm or the other object, that is claimed to own miraculous powers to cure, diagnose, stop or mitigate an illness in humans or animal.

CONSUMER GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION:

The Government has been conducting a state multimedia system awareness campaign since 2005 on numerous problems associated with shopper rights and responsibilities across various subjects.

'Awake shoppers awake' has these days become a family axiom. A lot of recently, joint substance campaigns are launched in partnership with the connected Government Departments, Organizations that cope with a mass shopper people. As Food Safety Standards Authority of Asian country nation on money services with the Federal Reserve Bank of India and on medicines with the National Pharmaceutical evaluation Authority through numerous electronic and medium like TV, Radio, Newspapers and out of doors advertising.

NATIONAL CONSUMER HELPLINE:

Government of nation has discovered a National Shopper Helpline with a fee range 1800-11-4000 or 14404, that provides recommendation.

STATE CONSUMER HELPS LINES:

State shopper Help lines are created by State Governments with the target to encourage Alternate shopper Disputes Redressal mechanism at State level and facilitate in breakdown cases through mediation.

SMART CONSUMER APPLICATION:

The Govt. has launched a mobile application ‘**Smart Consumer**’ to modify the patron to scan the code of the merchandise and obtain all details of the merchandise like name of the merchandise, details of manufacturer, year and month of manufacture, web content and shopper care details for creating criticism just in case of any defect.

GRIEVANCES AGAINST MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS (GAMA):

In its endeavour to deal with the matter of dishonourable advertisements, the govt has launched a portal known as ‘Grievances against Dishonourable Advertisements’.

ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

A web shopper Mediation Centre, established at the National school of law of Republic of India University, Bangalore underneath the aegis of Ministry Of shopper Affairs, Government of Republic of India aims to produce for a progressive infrastructure for breakdown shopper disputes each through physical in addition as online mediation through its platform.

CONCLUSION:

Consumer could be an important element of society and business depends on shopper. Once things are short in market, or some specific products are becoming short, have less provide then customers haven’t any selection apart from to shop for those products on high costs. If they struggle to urge product on low cost then they get calibre material, need to face deceptive advertisements talk over with the faux or improperly sent messages concerning totally different product, that tell that the merchandise is of prime quality however the truth is totally different.

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