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## Awareness and Satisfaction of Educated Consumers about Consumer Protection Legislation in Tirunelveli City

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### Abstract

Most of the Consumers are also not aware of their responsibilities and legislative measures enacted for safeguarding their interests. In order to maximize the consumer satisfaction, every business enterprise is constantly bound to follow, and practice the requirement for consumer protection on national and super national levels. Hence, there is a need to analyse the satisfaction of the consumers towards Consumer Protection Legislation. To examine the awareness and exercise of Consumer Protection Acts, Rights and Responsibilities of the consumers, to identify the recent developments in consumer educational systems and methods provided by the government and consumer organization, to analyses the different systems and methods of consumer education to create consumer consciousness, to highlight the best systems and methods to suit the needs of various Sections of the society at their present existing level position and to bring out the suitable suggestion for the betterment of the existing Consumer education system and method on the basis of the findings of the study. Majority of the respondents who are in the age group of 26-35 years are well aware of the consumer protection act. Majority of the respondents were Graduates. Majority of the respondents were private employees.

**Keywords:** awareness and satisfaction, consumer protection, legislation, Tirunelveli city

### Introduction

Understanding the economic system, becoming aware of sources of consumer information and how to use them, developing skills in decision making, and accepting consumer's rights and responsibilities area all aspects of consumer education identified as objectives of this study. Consumer education offers more than knowledge and skills: it promotes critical thinking, problem solving and action. The greatest barrier to more and better consumer education is the lack of demand and local support. Consumer education is not considered mainstream education. Many people assume that families teach this or that it is basic information every one automatically grows up knowing.

### Statement of the problem

Growing internationalization during the past three decades has become one of the most pervasive influences in business today (Cateora, 1983). Exploitation of human need and suffering is the worst crimes.

There are various ways in which an Indian consumer gets exploited such as black marketing, hoarding, profiteering, and adulteration of food, materials, manufacture and sale of spurious drugs, cheap imitation, sale - standard and shoddy goods. Government and consumer Organizations have been giving more importance to consumer protection Acts, Rights and its regulatory measures than the basic needs of consumer education. Most of the Consumers are also not aware of their responsibilities and legislative measures enacted for safeguarding their interests.

In order to maximize the consumer satisfaction, every business enterprise is constantly bound to follow, and practice the requirement for consumer protection on national and super national levels. Hence, there is a need to analyse the satisfaction of the consumers towards Consumer Protection Legislation.

### Objectives of the study

1. To examine the awareness and exercise of Consumer Protection Acts, Rights and Responsibilities of the consumers.
2. To identify the recent developments in consumer educational systems and methods provided by the government and consumer organization.

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3. To analyses the different systems and methods of consumer education to create consumer consciousness.
4. To highlight the best systems and methods to suit the needs of various Sections of the society at their present existing level position.
5. To bring out the suitable suggestion for the betterment of the existing Consumer education system and method on the basis of the findings of the study.

### Scope of study

The present study is aimed at helping the consumer protection movement to gain strong base in protecting consumer in the following ways. It is expected that the study will help to.

1. Enhance the awareness among the customers about the consumer protection act.
2. Increase the importance and consumer protection agencies.
3. Suggest workable solutions to improve the performance of the consumer protection agencies in the study area.

### Collection of data

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study, primary data were collected using the questionnaire by disturbing along the customers. Secondary data was collected from Magazines, internet etc.

### Period of study

The time taken for the study was 4 months from December 2014 to March 2015.

### Methodology

This study is compiled with both the primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from books and journals. The primary data were collected from the consumers. The interview schedule (vide appendix) was used to collect data from the consumers.

### Construction of tools

The interview schedule in this study has been structured by the research herself. The variables to be studied have been identified in the preliminary interview with some selected consumers.

The variables thus indentified by the researcher have been converted in to appropriate questions. The interview schedule so drafted was circulated among few research workers for a critical review with regard to wording, format, sequence and the like.

A pretest was conducted. The interview schedule was pre tested and revised in the light of the experience gained from the pre test

### Sampling design

The universe comprises people of Tirunelveli City who are the actual consumers. Since, the population of the universe is not known, convenience sampling technique has been adopted to select the sample respondents, who are 70 in number.

### Frame work of analysis

Chi-square test is used to study the personal factors influencing the awareness of consumers and consumer legislation.

The following tools are used in this study.

- Percentage analysis
- Pie-Chart
- Chi- square analysis
- Ranking analysis

### Findings and suggestions

- Majority of the respondents who are in the age group of 26-35 years are well aware of the consumer protection act.
- Majority of the respondents were Graduates.
- Majority of the respondents were private employees
- The study reveals that majority of the respondents were earning below RS15,000 per month
- 71% of the respondents were aware of consumer legislation.
- 28 respondents were highly aware of Standard Weights and Measurement Act, 26 respondents were aware to some extent about Essential Commodities Act, and 20 respondents were least aware of Consumer Protection Act.
- 40% of the respondents were aware of Consumer legislation through press media.
- 71% of the respondents were aware of consumer rights and responsibilities.
- 71% of the respondents were aware of systems and methods to protect the consumers.
- Majority of the respondents relied mainly on the consumer self-help group to protect their rights and interests.
- 70% of the respondents were aware of consumer protection council.
- 20 respondents were highly aware of district Forum, 15 respondents were aware to some extent about the State commission and 18 respondents were aware to the least extent regarding national commission.
- 71% of the respondents were aware of unfair trade practices
- Majority of respondents were willing to react towards unfair trade practices.
- 55% of the respondents made the complaint to the seller and 38% of the respondents made the complaint to consumer protection council.
- Chi-square test there is no relationship between the sex and the awareness activities.
- The first rank goes to consumer tips in newspaper (19%) followed by consumer section in radio (18%) and media advertisement (18%)
- Friends and relatives get the first rank regarding the sources of information to purchase decision.

### Suggestions

The following recommendations are given to enrich the awareness of the respondents about the consumer protection Act:

- Women participation in consumer voluntary organization should be encouraged.
- Consumerism as a subject of study may be included in the curriculum. Moreover, the programmer such as essays, quiz competitions and games should be conducted often to create awareness among the youth.
- Doordarshan and all India Radio should telecast Consumer awareness Programmes more frequency since these are the best media to create awareness among the illiterate Consumers.
- Movement like” Arivoli Iyakam” can also be used to educate the Consumers on their rights
- Major Publicity works is needed in creating awareness among Consumers. Local, State and National level audio-

Visual and electric media has to play an important role for this activity.

- Consumer can be educated through Voluntary Consumer Organizations and involvement of NGO's in this regard.
- Department of weights and measures may Organize Seminars and workshops to overcome the menace of adulterated, hazardous and substandard goods, wrong weights and measures against the unfair trade practices undertaken by some of the traders.
- The existing name of 'District Consumer Forum' may be replaced as 'District Consumer Forum'. The premises of the District Forum should focus with attractive posters on consumerism such as rights and duties of Consumers, free of cost filing of Complaints, simple redressed, speedy justice etc., Thus may be done to create awareness among the respondents in filing the Complaints.
- The Consumer Representatives has to be appointed in every Consumer protection Cell.
- The Government has to Co-Operate with the Consumer voluntary Organizations by providing Sufficient Financial Support.

### **Conclusion**

The success of the consumer protection Act 1986 depends on removing the lacunae in the Act and considering the wealthy suggestions and ultimately on its effective implementation by the central and State Governments. Last but not the least, strong and effective consumer protection is the need of the hour. It should be the way of life for all sections of the society to be a real consumers. The use of consumer education as a competitive tool has two basic aspects. Next, the firm integrates this consumers education material with its existing budgeted promotion plan and future budgeted promotion plans. No additional dollars are spent. The promotion program is developed to accommodate consumer education messages and other planned messages within the constraints of the promotion budget.

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