



Knowledge about consumer rights and responsibilities among rural people

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Abstract

A consumer is anyone who buys or uses any kind of product or service. It is the real deciding factor for all economic activities. Consumer rights and responsibilities are now an integral part of the life of an individual and point in our daily routine. In light of all these the present study was taken to investigate knowledge about consumer rights and responsibilities in Dabra village of Hisar district and assessment of the personal-profile, knowledge and constraint as consumer. A sample of 50 respondents was selected randomly. The result were analysed with the help of percentage and ranks. The result of the study found that majority of the rural people were aware about consumer rights and responsibilities and their highest level of knowledge was about 'right to safety and right to information' followed by the right to choose and right to Heard. Newspaper was the most effective source of knowledge. Most of respondents faced problem with the experience of less quantity than mentioned. Majority of the respondents were aware of their responsibilities practiced is know the prevailing price in the market, before buying the products. Results further found that majority of the respondents considered 'wastage of money and time' constraints with Utilizing Consumer Rights. Respondents were unaware about Silk mark standards and their faced negative effect on their consumer rights during covid 19.

Keywords: knowledge, consumer rights and responsibilities, source of knowledge, constraints

Introduction

The Word "consumer" is a derivative of the Latin word "Consumere" that means, "to take up totally or to eat". Consumer is known as a person who purchases a product or service for the purpose of consumption or utilization. Each consumer has certain requirements and wants. Consumers are the largest economic group and they are the central point of all economic activities in any country. Consumer right is 'the right to have information about the quality, potency, quantity, purity, price and standard of goods or services'. Consumer responsibility is taking personal responsibility for the environmental costs and consequences of what you purchase and use. Consumerism has been defined as a social movement seeking to augment the rights and powers of consumers in relation to sellers (Kotler, 2000).

Consumer knowledge is a process of making an individual or consumer knowledge of their rights and responsibilities when purchasing goods and services. It is essential for all customers so that they take the right decision and make the right choice about the products and services being sold and sold. Due to lack of knowledge consumers right's exploited by marketers. Public awareness of consumer rights and consumer protection measures are affected by is short of proper communication in India (Jayasubramanian *et al.* 2012). In India, National Consumer Day is observed on 24th December to protect the interests of the consumers in India and provide redressal to grievances of the consumers and

thereby aid fair trade practices.

Objective

1. To know the personal profile of the respondents.
2. To know the knowledge about consumer rights and responsibilities.
3. To find out the constraints of utilization of rights as consumer.

Methodology

The study was conducted in randomly selected Dabra village of Hisar district of Haryana state. In this study to assess the knowledge about consumer rights and responsibilities as consumer and their constraints. A sample of 50 respondents randomly was equal taken from gender, age-group, income, education. Data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire individually through face-to-face interview in their local language of the respondents. Percentages, ranks and mean were used to explain the consumer knowledge on different aspects. The category with highest frequency was given 1st rank and then other ranks given in descending order. Therefore, the scope of the study is classified to the knowledge of consumers, their perception and evaluation of consumer rights and responsibilities and helpful to design consumer education programs, especially in rural areas.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Personal- Profile of Respondents N=50

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-30	8	16.0
31-40	36	72.0
41-50	6	12.0

Gender		
Male	18	36.0
Female	32	64.0
Education		
Illiterate	4	8.0
Primary	11	22.0
Middle	17	34.0
Graduate	12	24.0
Post-Graduate	6	12.0
Caste		
General	42	84.0
BC	5	10.0
SC/ST	3	6.0
Marital status		
Married	33	66.0
Unmarried	17	34.0
Family type		
Nuclear	34	68.0
Joint	16	32.0
Monthly income		
Up to Rs. 10,000	14	28.0
Rs. 10001-20000	25	50.0
Above 20000	11	22.0

In table 1 clearly shows that maximum numbers of respondents (72%) belonged to 31-40 years of age followed by 20-30years (16%) and age group of 41-50 (12%) respectively. The data reveals that the majority of the respondents were female (64%) followed by males (36%). Majority of the respondents (34%) were middle level, graduate level education (24%) and primary (22%) followed by post-graduate (12%) and illiterate (8%) respectively. Caste which indicated that 84 percent of the respondents were belonging to general category, followed by 10 percent of respondents was belonging to BC category and only 6 percent were in SC/ST category. 66 percent respondents were married followed by unmarried status (34%). On the family types showed that majority of the respondents were living in nuclear families (68%) followed by joint families (32%). Maximum respondents (50%) were earning Rs.10001- 20000 per month followed by 28 percent who were earning up to Rs. 10000 per month. Only 22 percent respondents were having monthly income above Rs.20000.

Table 2: Awareness about Consumer Rights and Responsibilities among Rural People

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	92.0
No	4	8.0
Total	50	100

Table 2 depicts that 92% of the rural people were aware about consumer rights and responsibilities; they think as a consumer they have certain rights and responsibilities towards the use of product. Only 8% respondents were not aware of their consumer rights and responsibilities.

Table3: Knowledge about Consumer Rights N=50

	Frequency (%)		Rank
	Yes	No	
Consumer rights			
Right to safety	50 (100.0)	0	I
Right to information	50 (100.0)	0	I
Right to choose	48 (96.0)	2 (4.0)	II
Right to be heard	44 (88.0)	6 (12.0)	III
Right to seek redressal	26 (52.0)	24 (48.0)	VII
Right to basic needs	42 (84.0)	8 (16.0)	IV
Right to consumer education	40 (80.0)	10 (20.0)	V
Right to health and environment	36 (72.0)	14 (28.0)	VI

Rank given in table 3 represent for different rights that highest level of knowledge was regarding 'right to safety and right to information' (100%) followed by the right to choose (96%) and right to heard (88%). Least knowledge was found regarding the right to seek redressal (52.0).

Table 4: Source of Knowledge N=50

Source	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Newspaper	20	40.0	I
T.V.	4	8.0	IV
Friends and Neighbourers	16	32.0	II
Radio	3	6.0	V
Magazine and journals	2	4.0	VI
Poster	0	0	VII
Education	5	10.0	III

Table 4 shows that the source of knowledge of the consumer rights and responsibilities. Maximum respondent's main source of knowledge was newspaper (40%) followed by friends and neighbours (32%), education (10%), T.V. (8%), radio (6%) and magazine and journals are also good source of knowledge.

Table 5: Problems Faced By Rural People N=50

Problems faced by rural people	Frequency (%)	Rank
Poor quality of goods	37 (74.0)	II
False packaging	16 (32.0)	VII
False labeling	11 (22.0)	VIII
False weight and measures	27 (54.0)	IV
No standardized marks	21 (42.0)	V
Less quantity than mentioned	48 (96.0)	I
Adulteration	19 (38.0)	VI
Over pricing	31 (62.0)	III
Mean	26.25	

(Data has multiple responses, so the total percentage exceeds100)

Table 5 indicates that the problems faced by the rural people while purchasing goods and services. 96% respondents were experience of less quantity than mentioned, while 74% were faced the problem of poor quality of goods and over pricing (62%) followed by false weight and measures problem faced by respondents. Least problem faced by rural was false labeling (22%).

Table 6: Consumer Following Responsibilities While Purchasing Goods & Service

Consumer Responsibilities	Frequency (%)	Rank
Buying standard goods with standard marks like ISI, FPO etc.	39 (78.0)	IV
Checking the quantity, potency and purity of the products	44 (88.0)	II
To know the prevailing price in the market, before buying the product	48 (96.0)	I
Negotiating for the price of the goods, below MRP	41 (82.0)	III
Asking for cash receipt for purchase made from the shopkeeper	38 (76.0)	V
Asking for the warrantee/ guarantee card for the equipments purchased	44 (88.0)	II
Checking the printed terms and conditions written on the package	32 (64.0)	VI
Mean	40.85	

(Data has multiple responses, so the total percentage exceeds 100)

In this table, the most common responsibilities practiced by respondents is know the prevailing price in the market, before buying the products (96%) and both checking the quantity, potency and purity of the products and asking for the warrantee/guarantee card for the equipment purchased (88%). Out of sample size 82% respondents aware about negotiating for the price of the goods, below MRP, 78% respondents buying goods with standard marks, 76% respondents taken the cash receipt for purchase and least responsibilities in checking the printed terms and conditions written on the package(64%).

Table7: Constraints Faced By Consumers with Utilizing Consumer Rights

Constraints	Frequency (%)	Rank
Lack of knowledge	40 (80.0)	V
Wastage of money and time	46 (92.0)	I
Have no trust in getting justice	33 (66.0)	VI
Process is stressful	42 (84.0)	IV
Lack of cooperation from members of forum	45 (90.0)	II
Difficulty in finding location of forum	24 (48.0)	VII
Procedure for filling complaints is complicated	44 (88.0)	III
Mean	39.14	

(Data has multiple responses, so the total percentage exceeds100)

Table 7 explained that majority of the respondents considered ‘wastage of money and time’(92%) and ‘lack of cooperation from members of forum’(90%) as main constraints faced by respondents. Next ranked constraints faced by people were ‘procedure for filling complaints is complicated’ followed by ‘process is stressful’ and ‘lack of knowledge’. Least constraint was ‘difficulty in finding location of forum’.

Table 8: Knowledge about Standards

Standards	Unaware	Partial aware	Fully aware
Agmark	33 (66.0)	5 (10.0)	12 (24.0)
ISI	30 (60.0)	2 (4.0)	18 (36.0)
Woolmark	38 (76.0)	7 (14.0)	5 (10.0)
Hallmark	36 (72.0)	11(22.0)	3 (6.0)
Silk mark	40 (80.0)	9 (18.0)	1 (2.0)
Handloom mark	39 (78.0)	8 (16.0)	3 (6.0)
Vegetarian/ non-vegetarian mark	29 (58.0)	6 (12.0)	15 (30.0)
Energy efficiency rating	34 (68.0)	10 (20.0)	6 (12.0)
Mean	34.87	7.25	7.87

Table 8 depicts that respondents were unaware about Silk mark (80%), Handloom mark (78%), Woolmark (76%) and Hallmark (72%) respectively respondents having unaware about these standards. Respondents were having fully awareness about ISI (36%), Vegetarian/ non-vegetarian mark (30%), Agmark (24%) and Energy efficiency rating (12%) standards.

Table 9: Covid 19 Impact on Consumer’s Rights and Responsibilities

Impact on respondents	No effect	Negative effect	Positive effect
No. of respondents	11 (22.0)	36 (72.0)	3 (6.0)

Tables 9 indicate that 72 percent of respondents were negative effect on their consumer rights during covid 19 periods whereas 22 percent were no effect and 6 percent of consumer gain positive effect.

Table10: Pre and Post- Knowledge among Rural People about Consumer Rights

Variables	Pre-knowledge	Post-knowledge	Gain knowledge
Right to safety	42 (84.0)	50 (100.0)	8 (16.0)
Right to information	41 (82.0)	50 (100.0)	9 (18.0)
Right to choose	45 (90.0)	48 (96.0)	3 (6.0)
Right to be heard	43 (86.0)	44 (88.0)	1 (2.0)
Right to seek redressal	18 (36.0)	26 (52.0)	8 (16.0)
Right to basic needs	39 (78.0)	42 (84.0)	3 (6.0)
Right to consumer education	33 (66.0)	40 (80.0)	7 (14.0)
Right to health and environment	29 (58.0)	36 (72.0)	7 (14.0)
Mean	36.25	42.0	5.75

Table10 revealed that pre-knowledge (36.25) and post-knowledge (42.0) of respondents about consumer rights. Therefore gain in knowledge was increased (5.75) at post-exposure.

Conclusion

Knowledge of consumer rights is the most essential issue. Every consumer’s right to get the desired product or services by means of fair trade. A product or service is only worth the amount paid by the consumer if it derives consumer satisfaction. The result of the study concluded that majority of respondent were of the age group of 31-40 yr (72%), belonging to general category (84%), were middle level of education (34%), having married status (66%), having nuclear families (68%) and earning Rs. 10001-20000 monthly income. Results found that majority of the rural people were aware about consumer rights and responsibilities and their highest level of knowledge was about ‘right to safety and right to information’ (100%) followed by the right to choose (96%) and right to heard (88%). Most of the respondent gain knowledge through newspaper (40%) and friends and neighbours (32%). They faced problem with the experience of less quantity than mentioned (96%) followed by poor quality of goods (74%). The most common responsibilities practiced by respondents know the prevailing price in the market, before buying the products (96%). Results further found that majority of the respondents considered ‘wastage of money and time’ (92%) constraints with Utilizing Consumer Rights. They were unaware about Silk mark (80%), Handloom mark (78%),

Woolmark (76%) and Hallmark (72%) and having fully awareness about ISI (36%), Vegetarian/ non-vegetarian mark (30%), Agmark (24%) and Energy efficiency rating (12%) standards. Majority of respondents (72%) were negative effect on their consumer rights during covid 19 periods. About consumer rights and responsibilities gain in knowledge mean was increased (5.75) at post- exposure. To conclude government should make various camps in rural areas about their consumer rights and responsibilities.

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