Chapter - 7
Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

The survey led us to some very interesting conclusions. These can be summed up in the following points.

❖ Consumerism is still a far cry in the city of Calcutta. Consumers do not even lodge complaint or voice their opinion (Figure 12). Almost no one has lodged complaint with any forum or consumer groups. Only some sporadic responses were experienced at retail level. Organising a consumer movement is still a long way to go.

❖ Consumers across the board are unhappy with the product be it with price or quality as evident from the findings in figure 4 and 5. It is also clear from figure 11 that majority of the consumers’ feel that the products do not perform as claimed.

❖ So far as the issue of consumerism is concerned it is very much evident from the findings that awareness about the concept is still very poor among the consumers in Calcutta. However some progress has been made after 2005 with the increase in effort by the department of consumer affairs towards illuminating the consumers about their rights with the ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ campaign as can be seen from figure 20. Awareness levels about consumers’ rights have increased. However there have been no significant changes
in terms of conversion of the increased level of awareness in action except for some sporadic activities demonstrated by the consumers at the retail level.

❖ The survey shows that in significantly large number of occasions the reason for using or retaining the product is absence of alternatives and the helplessness of the consumer with regard to various deterrents (Figures 7 and 8)

❖ Marketers still continue to use terms that many do not understand with an objective towards false image building exercise and towards giving a product an improved personality (as claimed by most as per figure 23). Consumers clearly expressed that they do not understand these terminologies (figure 10) and the marketers also clarified that that they do it more to create better image and differentiate their product.

❖ A very insignificant percentage of the consumers’ surveyed in the first survey claimed to know the presence of Consumer Protection Act. Things however improved considerably in the second survey (Figure 9)

❖ The importance of social marketing efforts towards instilling good values and influencing behavioural changes is well established through the findings of the survey (Figures 18 and 19) that considerable changes being noticed in the behaviour of the consumers after the campaign of awakening the consumers got underway since 2005. Mere effort to awaken the consumer and make them aware is not enough since the survey also reveals the poor state of
delivering justice on time. Improvement in infrastructure and decentralisation is required.

❖ Marketers voluntary effort towards consumer education is missing and many of them are found wanting in terms of providing more information beyond that what is required in accordance with the legal minimum. Marketers should be further encouraged to believe that respecting the consumers and their rights will ensure their existence in long term.

❖ Better and stricter law enforcement is necessary particularly in the frontier of law enforcement and resolving disputes in time. Existing legal provisions are not enough. This requirement is felt from the findings shown in figure 16.

❖ A good number of firms believe that Consumer movement is deterrent to operational freedom and profitability (Figure 24)

❖ The state of timely delivery of justice is pathetic. Figure 25 reveals this sorry state of affairs.

❖ Inadequate education is a very important reason why many consumers refrain from pursuing complaint against the offender.
7.2 SUGGESTIONS

❖ A much more concerted effort towards harmonising social marketing efforts and strengthening of consumer rights can only ensure better and improved environment for the consumer thereby ushering in the era of 'caveat venditor' and ringing out 'caveat emptor'.

❖ Much stricter law enforcement machinery is required in order to instill confidence and belief in the consumer regarding the system, which at the moment is missing as seen from the response in figures 13 and 14.

❖ Voluntary effort on the part of marketers is necessary towards educating consumers regarding various material aspects of the product or service. For example that what CESC often does in Calcutta through circulating leaflets about how to conserve energy, save electricity and which type of electrical equipments to use for a particular purpose.

❖ Literacy has been a key issue. Hence campaign for literacy needs to be strengthened without delay so as to make the consumer more empowered and enlightened.

❖ The drive towards increasing consumer awareness is confined mainly in advertising through television broadcasts. Effort should be made to organise road shows, make school visits to illuminate children and such mediums to reach a larger clientele base.

❖ There should be encouragements for formation of consumer forums from government at lower levels and more within the reach of common man. Since many respondents did not
have any idea about where to go and lodge and many of them complained inconvenience (Figure 15). This would go a long way in furthering the cause of consumers' interest and facilitate formation organised movement towards seeking justice and rights in their favour in situation where such an action is warranted.