Chapter 5
Chapter 5

OUTCOME OF THE SURVEY

Part A: SURVEY OF 1410 INDIVIDUALS

5.1 Objective

Consumers in the society were always at the receiving end. With virtually left with no choice either for quality product that keeps its promise or with the opportunity to seek redressal to the grievances, they find themselves helpless. The survey therefore seeks to establish the relevance in this regard against the backdrop of increased effort of the ministry of consumer affairs, Government of India, towards making amends to this situation and empowering the Indian consumers with more information and encouraging them to stand up and speak for their rights and justice. It has to be kept in mind that Government's action is not consumerism. Government can at best create an environment within which consumerism can blossom. This study aims to find that connect.

5.2 Sample selection

In order to find out the reaction of individuals towards five commonly used products; Detergents, Shampoo, Toilet Soap, Cosmetics and Toothpaste were selected and for each individual category a mix of brands, both premium as well as mass brands were taken into consideration. However the interviewees were allowed to mention the brands they use in the questionnaires they were forwarded if they did not match that mentioned in the
questionnaire. Across 141 Municipal wards of Calcutta 10 individuals (5 male and 5 Female in order to avoid gender bias) from each ward was chosen on the basis of Non-probabilistic (Convenient) sampling subject to condition that the persons are at least graduates. To have a better representation the sample was chosen from various corners of each ward and not particularly from one single area.

5.3 Research Methodology

a) Consideration of time period
The survey was conducted in two phases. Initially the objective was to conduct the survey over a single phase during the time period 2001 to 2003 and bring out the findings with analysis and suggestion. However when the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India in the year 2002 adopted Consumer Awareness and Redressal and Enforcement of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 as one of the priority agenda for the year 2003-04 and asked the Department to stitch together a National Action Plan, we decided to wait for the outcome. Eventually when in 2005 the high decibel ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ campaign was launched, it was decided that a repeat survey on the same sample be conducted to find out how the campaign is working and this would give a better insight into our objective analysis as well as help our cause in view of drawing the relevance of such social awareness programmes and their impact on consumers’ awareness level as a basic element of consumerism. Thus the second phase of the survey was conducted during the time period
2006 to 2008 with some additions in the existing questionnaire and the interviewed sample (same as the first survey) was primarily asked to respond to the added queries only.

b) Application of Methods
First of all, the primary data derived from such survey was studied and analysed with the aim of preparing and presenting a comprehensive chart. The primary data was then entered into Microsoft Excel, which then converted the data into various tables and Bar diagrams for analysis and observation.

5.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The analysis and Interpretation of available data of the sample collected from the consumers are thus presented through tables, charts and graphs. The graphical presentation of the analysed data shows the following trends.
An attempt was made to have equal representation of Male and Female in the survey in order to have a balanced outcome of the views across the gender. The female respondents were further classified in terms of Working and Housewife categories and their break up is given in the following diagram:
The above chart gives the break-up of the female respondents in terms of working women and housewives. The entire sample was also classified in terms of the educational qualification where three categories were specified for eligibility, Graduation, Post-graduation and Professionals. The objective was to ensure some commonality on this account as the findings on sample base with poor literacy levels might give a biased view and might be challenged on the premise of literacy. This is why we deliberately made this pre-qualification. The following figure (Figure 3) gives the breakup of the sample on this account.
**Figure 3: Profession wise break-up of the respondents**

The following two figures show the degree of unhappiness/concern among the respondents with regard to price as well as quality of the product they use.
The above findings (Figure 4 and 5) clearly point out that a good 58% of the Male respondents and 70% of the Female respondents and collectively 64% of the sample showing
unhappiness/concern with price or price changes. The figures increased in the repeat survey where collectively 66% of the people are unhappy with the price. Interestingly it was observed that in the repeat survey the unhappiness had more to do with people being more aware about their rights to challenge MRP than with price changes.

Similarly on the quality frontier 54% of the Male respondents and 54% of the Female respondents expressed concern for quality. In the same way the figures increased (56% for both Male and Female) in the repeat survey and awareness among the consumer has been the primary reason for such change.

The following figure shows the brand retention rate among the consumers since the first survey.

**Figure 6: Number of respondents who retained their Brands**

![Number of Respondents Retained their Brands since First Survey](image)
In terms of the reason for brand usage (despite being unhappy) and retention (second survey) the following figures give the picture of the reasons expressed primarily in support of such behaviour by the respondents:

*Figure 7: Reasons for Brand Usage/Retention (Male)*
Figure 8: Reasons for Brand Usage/Retention (Female)
The two diagrams (Figure 7 and 8) clearly demonstrate that majority of the consumers were using the brands more out of compulsion than out of satisfaction. The observation is dependable since Figure 6 previously provided us with the data of significantly high brand retention rate.

The response of the sample with regard to some issues like their awareness about Consumer Protection Act, ability to understand the technical terminologies used in the advertisements of the brands and their confidence in the marketers claims are provided in the following charts:

**Figure 9: Awareness of Consumer Protection Act.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents Aware about Consumer Protection Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (705)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (705)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey shows that there has been a significant improvement (86% in case of Male respondents, 104% in case of Female respondents and 95% overall) in the awareness levels of the
consumers after the ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ campaign was initiated. Although level of awareness, in its totality is still a paltry 28%.

**Figure 10: Respondents understanding the technical terms in the Advertisements**

| Number of Respondents understanding the Technical Terms as mentioned in the Advertisements |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Male (705)                      | Female (705)                    |
| 13                              | 12                              |

The above survey (Figure 10) shows that virtually no one (2% overall) understands what the technical details are about, as mentioned in the advertisements.
Figure 11: Respondents who feels that the product performs as claimed

Number of Respondents who feels that the product performs as claimed

193
Male (705)

186
Female (705)

On this issue the response from the survey is again discouraging. Only 27% of the total respondents believe in marketers claims.

The respondents were also enquired about whether they voiced their grievances at any level when the product was found not in keeping with the claims of the marketer. The following figure shows that consumers were simply not enthusiastic in this regard:
Only 43 male respondents and 57 female respondents expressed that they complained about the product. Everyone lodged their complaint with the retailer. In the repeat survey the figures improved significantly to the extent of 158 male respondents and 165 female respondents. While all chose the same earlier course of action of lodging complain with the retailer, 4 male respondents approached consumer forum.
Figure 13: Response to complaints (Male)

Response to complains (Male)

![Bar chart showing response to complaints for male customers in two surveys](image)

- **Product was promptly replaced**
  - First Survey: 13
  - Second Survey: 30
- **Product was replaced after a few days**
  - First Survey: 59
  - Second Survey: 77
- **Amount paid was returned**
  - First Survey: 0
  - Second Survey: 22
- **Amount paid was not returned**
  - First Survey: 43
  - Second Survey: 136
- **Dispute was settled on time**
  - First Survey: 0
  - Second Survey: 0
- **Dispute not settled on time**
  - First Survey: 0
  - Second Survey: 2
- **Disputes pending**
  - First Survey: 2
  - Second Survey: 0
Figure 14: Response to complaints (Female)

Response to complains (Female)

- First Survey ■ Second Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Survey</th>
<th>Second Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product was promptly replaced</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product was replaced after a few days</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount paid was returned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount paid was not returned</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute was settled on time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute not settled on time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disputes pending</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is quite evident from the figures given earlier (Figure 13 and 14) that in the event of dissatisfaction in almost all the cases the money was not returned to the consumer. The consumer was sometimes given replacements promptly and sometimes after few days. However there was significant improvement noticed in the second survey where the money was returned in 59 such occasions (22 Male, and 37 Female). It is also noticeable that all the complaints were lodged with the retailer and there has been no such instance where consumer forum came into the picture in the first survey. In the second survey 4 cases were found where complain was lodged with the consumer forum, although not one single dispute was settled within the stipulated time frame of 150 days (90 days where it does not require reports from any independent agency).

The survey also delved into the reason of as to why there is considerable apathy among the consumers towards seeking justice in any form although being quite unhappy with the product in numerous occasions. The following table reveals the response of the sample towards various possible reasons:
At the retail level inconvenience, time and noncooperation was cited as the primary reason for not approaching the retailer for any kind of redressal.

Almost 86% of the respondents (collectively) agreed upon the fact that more strict measures be taken to ensure protection of consumers from being deceived by the marketers as seen from the following table. The following table also gives the distribution of how the respondents felt as to be the areas where such measures need to be adopted.
Figure 16: Respondents’ view regarding control measures.

It shows that **Law enforcement** and **timeliness of Justice** was considered as the two most important attributes towards protecting consumer’s interest by the respondents.

In the second part of the survey that was conducted on the same sample after the launch of ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ campaign by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the following two findings deserve mentioning in the summary. The first one gives us the picture of how visible the advertisement by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs was.
The above chart shows that the advertisement was very highly visible among the respondents. The figures are almost 84% for male and 95% for female respondents.

The next table provides information as to what noticeable changes in the behaviour of respondents took place because of such initiative by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. The respondents were asked to provide information regarding how they behaved earlier.
Figure 18: Change for Male respondents

Noticeable Behavioral Change reported by Male Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>First Survey</th>
<th>Second Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Started taking receipts</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became careful about 'best before dates'</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked for replacements</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargained for price</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became more careful about ingredients</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figures 18 and 19 make it very clear that consumers became more vigilant in the second survey. However in the area of asking product replacements and being careful about the ingredients of the product the response is still considerably low across both male and female respondents.

The following table (Figure 20) shows the consumers’ perception regarding how the campaign ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ has benefitted them. The response clearly shows how reaching out to common
man brings in desirable changes in action, behaviour and thereby the value system of the society.

**Figure 20: Response to the Advertisement ‘Jago Grahak Jago’**

The findings clearly indicate that consumers have considerably benefitted from such campaign and this is very much evident from the pattern in which they have responded to being more informed, empowered and confident towards voicing their rights and claims.
Part B: SURVEY OF THE MARKETERS

5.5 Objective

The objective of the survey is to find out marketers response to the opinions given by the consumers in the earlier survey. The survey in this regard also attempts to find marketers reaction to increased pressure from consumer action groups and also if any voluntary measures being adopted by them over and above the legal minimum to ensure improved consumer satisfaction while ensuring better societal commitments.

5.6 Sample

A list of Twelve Fast Moving Consumer Goods producing companies were selected primarily taking into consideration the products and brands mentioned in the survey and also the existence of a Zonal/regional/city office of the company in Kolkata. The senior most people representing the Marketing department are interviewed for the purpose of receiving response from the Brand Managers. The companies selected were ITC Ltd., Procter and Gamble Home Products Ltd., Dabur India Ltd. (Balsara Products), Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Godrej consumer products Ltd., Lakme Lever, Henkel-Spic India Ltd., Colgate-Palmolive India Ltd., Reckitt-Benckiser Ltd., Modi-Revlon Ltd., Nirma Ltd., Oriflame (India) Pvt. Ltd.
5.7 Methodology adopted for the Survey

Questionnaires were prepared and the valued opinion of the marketer is taken down for the purpose of analysing the findings. The conclusion was drawn on the basis of the response. In this situation also the marketers were revisited once again after the launch of the campaign ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ to find out if there has been any perceptible change noticed by them in terms of consumers behaviour reflected in increased number of complaints and grievances.

5.8 Analysis and interpretation of responses

The responses in this case may be summarised in the following points:

- Every corporate body interviewed responded in the affirmative that their product provides that what the consumer is looking for.
- The reason given by the Brand Managers regarding why their brands are still at times ignored by consumers can be understood from the following diagram:
From the above response price sensitivity is highlighted as the significant reason for not buying products by the consumers.

❖ On the issue of providing additional information (for example regarding educating consumers on certain issues relating to caring for his/her skin) other than that required under law only five of the companies surveyed came out with positive response. They are Hindustan Unilever Ltd., ITC, Procter & Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive and Oriflame.

❖ On the issue of consumer grievance redressal everyone responded in having toll-free numbers for consumer to call back, websites to log on and voice their opinion. However no one gave any concrete numbers as to how many of them are attended and disposed or has been received at all. Only five
companies. Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Procter & Gamble, ITC, Colgate-Palmolive and Lakme have mentioned having standing instruction given at retail level to handle disputes at lower levels.

- Significantly only six managers felt that the consumers possibly understand the technical details given in the product advertisements. This can be seen in the following figure.

*Figure 22: Response of Companies as to whether consumers understand every detail of the attributes claimed by the Brand*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response of Companies regarding whether the consumer understand every detail of the attributes claimed by the brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the question of how the technical details affect the brand perceptions vary from one marketer to another. This can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 23: Response of Marketer regarding the use of technical terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response of Marketer regarding use of Technical Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table very clearly shows that significantly eight marketers expressed that using technical terms increases the product image.

The following chart shows the marketers’ response regarding their views on organised consumer movement.
It may be noted that three of the firms surveyed consider consumer movements as resistances towards increased profitability and freedom of operation of the firm.

- Regarding relevance, present status and prospect of consumer movement in India significantly everyone pointed towards more government initiatives being required for better consumer justice.
- With regard to the survey conducted after the ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ campaign got underway everyone agreed upon the fact that enquiries and questions at retail level have increased.
Part C: FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY DONE AT CONSUMER FORUMS

5.9 Objective

The objective of this survey is not to find out how many cases were registered and how many of them were disposed but rather to find out the figures as to how many of them were disposed within the stipulated time frame of 150 days (90 days where it does not require reports from external agency). The survey was also intended towards finding out reasons for consumer’s apathy towards coming and lodging complaints and the reasons thereof.

5.10 Analysis of the responses

The first information that we tried to gather was the state of complaint disposal within the Calcutta (Kolkata) jurisdiction of the Consumer Forum located at Bhawani Bhawan, Alipore. The findings are given in the following chart (Source: Annual Reviews of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of West Bengal for the year ending 2003 and 2008. The reason for taking this two particular year endings was to get the picture of the state of affairs pre and post ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ campaign):
Analysis of the figures collected from the Annual Reviews of the Department of Consumer Affairs, West Bengal reveals that in Kolkata (Calcutta) of the 28237 (out of 28983 received) cases having being dissolved as on 30.09.03 only 7212 (a meagre 26%) cases were disposed within the stipulated time frame. The functioning of Consumer Forums can be judged by considering the disposal of complaints within the stipulated time frame of 90 days and 150 days (depending upon whether independent report is required from external agency or not). In this regard the study reveals that the time frame has hardly been adhered to.

The study also took into consideration the impact of the increased effort on the part of the Department of Consumer
Affairs on the consumers and for that purpose we took the data of the cases registered at District, State and National commission since inception till the year 2004-05 and the number of cases filed in the year 2005-06. While at the District and State level the growth in the number of cases filed was not that significant, at National Level the growth was enormous. While for the four previous years the total number of cases filed was 35535, for the year 2005-06 alone the figure was 15121. When it was enquired for the reason behind the District and State level figures not being that encouraging, investigations revealed illiteracy as one of the reasons for such dismal numbers. This is because although the law allows the consumer to present his/her own case personally without taking help of any lawyer, majority of them cannot adopt this path for poor educational level. It was also observed that at District and State Level people are not that deep pocketed to pursue a case by paying the Lawyer. At National Level however the issue is different, since complaints exceeding claims of Rupees One Crore being filed there. Hence it is obvious that for such a huge amount the complainant will be willing to spend money to get justice and see an end to it.

The rate of disposal however is very high. The percentage is more than 80% across the board. However as they say that 'Justice delayed is Justice denied', the figures of delayed justice simply proves the issue.

The following reasons were highlighted by the officials of the forum to explain consumers’ apathy towards lodging complain with the forum are pointed out in the order in which they are mentioned:
1. Poor Accessibility
2. Absence of timely justice
3. Inadequate Finance
4. Poor Promotion by Government
5. Complexity of documentation

When the forum officials were enquired about the reasons for not being able to deliver justice in time, the forum representative attributed the following reasons in the order of their importance:

1. Non cooperation of the defendant
2. Inadequate documents
3. Financial might of the defendant
4. Infrastructural inadequacies
5. Complexity in the process

Further enquiries revealed that although the consumer forum under the provisions of Consumer Protection Act of 1986, provides the option to the complainant to present his/her own case without being represented by any lawyer, the bench officials opined that lack of legal knowledge and expertise and in many cases illiteracy become the most important barrier towards availing this opportunity. Hence in such a situation they put themselves at the mercy of the legal sharks and therefore only the well to do and the deep pocketed have the power to drag the offender to the court of law and seek justice. The common man is again left out.