CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
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The phenomenon of protecting consumers from the unscrupulous tendencies of business has assumed important role in the present Indian Society. Voluntary initiative by the consumers through the establishment of consumer organisations forms the central strand in the consumer welfare movement. Not much has been written and explored about the working and accomplishments of these organisations. In this chapter an attempt has been made to present the review of various studies-carried out in the field of consumer welfare under two headings.

1 Consumer movement in India:- History, government regulation, departments and agencies engaged in consumer protection and self regulation by the business.

2 Consumer organisations :- Development, activities and functioning etc.

2.1 Consumer movement in India

Marilyn Nagy (1976) pointed out in his study that majority of the respondents supported the idea of consumer education courses for adults and high school students and availability of a local consumer specialist whom residents could contact for information. They also supported the government’s role as a provider of consumer information. They also felt that business should provide better quality products which require less service, even if they cost more, replace defective-in-warranty products, provide more legislations at the federal level so that the defaulters could not escape from prosecution.

According to Aurther Alan et.al. (1979), many consumer protection problems are consumer information problems. He further stated that Government regulation of product qualities is compared with governmental regulation of information about qualities as alter native consumer measures. It was argued that product regulation may generate net social gains when consumers may be rudely in formed, but it cannot, in general. restore efficiency to the economy while some policy of information regulation can restore efficiency, but it may be beneficial to the higher income groups.

Donna Ruth (1980) stated that there was a significant position between consumer willingness to accept responsibility for self-protection and their attitude
toward regulation and education. There was also positive relationship between consumer knowledge about regulations and their attitude toward self protection.

A study showed consumers to be more disturbed by poor products than by dishonest advertising consumers were upset by product designs that did not meet their needs and poor quality control (Gene Tekser, 1980).

Charles H. Davis et al. (1981) made an effort to investigate disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged consumer’s decision process concerning deceptive practice viz. Awareness of deceptive business practices. Interest in deceptive business practices, awareness of remedial avenues, preferences for remedial action, intentions for remedial action and behavioural response. The results found the appropriate decision process for consumer groups. Further, significant differences between groups occurred on different hypothesized steps of decision making, e.g. on remedial avenues and behavioural response. In each case, disadvantaged consumers were significantly less aware or exhibited significantly fewer responses than did disadvantaged consumers.

A study was conducted by CSG Krishnamachanyulu et al. (1981). This study has revealed that 47 percent of the advertisements were only persuasive and 35 percent of them were informative. 12 and 6 percent of the advertisements aimed at image building and public service respectively. 18.2 percent of the respondents who participated in this survey expressed that many of the present advertisements were also deceptive and 10.1 per cent of them stated that the advertisements tended to hide the information which should be disclosed.

Narain Singh et al. (1981) did a comprehensive and critical study on the working of MRTP commission. Their findings indicated as follows:

(i) The percentage of approvals, rejections, and pending application was 62.60, 22.00 and 15.40 respectively of the total applications.

(ii) Assets of large business houses increased by 12.5 percent between 1972 to 1975 which was not considered normal.

(iii) MRPT Act failed to hamper the growth of private sector because the commission’s effective participation thus came out 7.39 percent in which the advice was sought.
(iv) The Commission passed orders of large number of cases involving various kinds of restrictive trade practices. It was further noted that dynamic personality of chairman played a key role in this regard.

(v) Various suggestions were put forward regarding the modification of Act viz. bringing the public sector under its purview, applicable to unfair labour practices and modification in various definitions.

In a study Abdul (1981) noted that corporate social responsibility was seen by almost all the senior executives a relevant constraint to business and a large percentage considered social responsibility as a goal of business along with that of profit. Groups which were involved themselves, directly in the day to day running of company, were found more closely associated with the decision on social responsibility. This findings together with those questions on the costs and benefits associated with social responsibility suggest a tendency to be concerned more with economic aspects of decision rather than moral and social aspects.

From a study conducted by D.A.R. Subramanyam et al. (1982) in Guntur district of M.P., it is concluded that there was a need for the establishment of consumer organisations and consumer councils. The study observed that nearly 66 percent customers believed that the consumers had themselves to take initiative rather than looking for somebody else to rescue them.

A survey was conducted by Arun K.Kapoor et al. (1983)-encompassing different kinds of people-marketing managers, advertising agencies, media people, academicians, housewives, students, villagers etc. regarding advertising ethics. It revealed an interesting line of thought about misleading claims. Most of the persons were equivocal in condemning such advertisements and believed that by such advertisements the advertiser was doing more harm to himself than other, as for most of the products/services to survive repeat patronage by consumer is necessary. Still there is a chance of legal proceedings like those undertaken by CERC, CGSI etc. as well as negative advertising through word of mouth.

In a critical study on the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, Satchidanand Rath et al. (1983) reports various facts as outlined below:
i. The percentage of adulteration in case of mild products is extremely high and covers 51 percent of the total prosecutions. Vanaspati, edible oil and prepared food are the next in degree of adulteration above grains, grams and species.

ii. Percentage of convictions are more than acquittals. Acquittals are more on technical grounds for malfeasance of prescribed procedure.

iii. Mostly the vendors are prosecuted. Prosecutions of manufacturers, stockists and distributors are negligible. Adulteration is more rampant in urban areas rather than rural areas.

iv. The provisions permitting a purchaser is ineffective as he is required to follow the procedures prescribed for food inspector. The defense to prove that articles are purchased in the same condition under a warranty appears to be inadequate to safeguard his interest as the burden lies on him to link the long chain.

v. There is no provision for court to infer or presume possession of adulterated articles of food or adulterants until and unless the contrary is proved through consumption.

vi. There is no provision for exemption of liability in cases of damages beyond the control of human agency.

Some studies reveal the attitude of the complainants with regard to filing complaints to the concerned department. A study by the U.S. office of consumer affairs showed that among small purchases 70 percent of complainants who got satisfaction would repurchase, 37 percent of those who never complained but were dissatisfied would repurchase (Consumer Current, 1983).

While assessing the consumer communication process, the Coco Cola company noted that 95 percent of consumers who complain to an average of five to six people. Those complaint and are not satisfied talk to nine or ten people (Consumer Current, 1983).

Nabuaki et al. (1984) examined the nature of the public's attitude toward business institutions in seven social issues. The results indicate that dissatisfaction with business performance and the resulting pressure on government to provide remedies was greatest on issues, such as product quality, truthful advertising, and pollution clean up; modest on occupational safety, health, product safety and responsibility to local
community; and small on equal employment opportunity issues. Analysis on the relationship between legitimacy gap and regulatory gap indicates that different intervening variables operate for each specific issue.

In an article, H.C. Chaudhary (1987) makes the following observations about the emergence of consumer movement in India in mid-sixties:

i. Consumers were exposed to visible and invisible exploitation,

ii. Companies opposed the consumer proposals and lobbied against new legislation in India.

iii. There were multifarious reasons for the development of consumer movement in India namely, failure of business to meet increasing needs of modern society, political appeal of consumer protection, the deterioration of business ethics, lack of governmental enforcement of consumer laws and lack of consumer education and information.

iv. The prevailing conditions which were responsible for the consumer movement viz. Structural conductiveness. structural strains, growth of generalised belief and precipitating factors and mobilization for action.

Arvind (1988) views that in India a wide gap exists between percept and practice. The government orders and legislations are not adequate. They leave a sufficient scope for loose interpretations. So the traders can either bribe the officials or take recourse to legal help in quashing down the government orders. In both cases, the consumer becomes helpless victim and if the government does issue the orders with tighter construction, the consumer remains without protection.

Industrial Textological Research Centre, Lucknow, tested 13,000 food samples and found that 70 percent contained harmful dyes over a period of ten years—1972–82 (cited in Rusi-B-Gimi, 1988)

In the age of information revolution the role of advertisement has become prominent in moulding the behaviour of masses. According to Surendra Gupta (1988), the people belonging to middle income bracket are more swayed by the advertisements. A large number of consumer's have clearly stated that the T.V. advertisement has adversely affected their life style in one way or the other way and 25 per cent of them feel that it has widely affected their life behaviour regarding
purchases. It also holds a high potential for social change and development in this country downed by illiterates or Semi-illiterates.

Another study on advertisement was conducted by Anurag et al. (1989), its findings conclude that only 2 percent of business has managed to substantiate their claims. This study further indicated that the business community was largely callous to its customer’s interest.

In an exploitation about the information printed on the package. V.V. Gopal and Krishna (1989) observe that most of the consumers attend to price factor only and fewer customers are conscious about other information on the label.

There is a widespread dissatisfaction among the consumer and the complainants. A. Saklani et al. (1989) conclude in a study that while over 60 percent consumers are dissatisfied with present day standards of many durable and non-durable goods only about half of them actually complain to retailer concerned. Out of those who complain, a little over half manage to obtain relief by way of product exchange or price-refund. Those who do not find redressal make no further attempts to gain justice.

In another study, A. Saklani et al. (1989) observe that on the whole consumer shy away from complaining mainly because either the product concerned is very low priced one or they believe that redressal will not be made. On the other hand business projected a very positive attitude towards consumer welfare.

Analysing the consumer complaints, Manubhai Shah (1989) states that the complainants are more conscious about the end result of their lodged complaints and there is also one qualitative change noticed that complaints are coming not only from individual consumers, but also from industrial, commercial organisations as well. The complaints largely pertain to services, supplies, refund of deposits and booking.

Promila and Harpreet (1989) conducted a study on an image test in order to gauge the image of the railway passenger service among the public. According to its findings, most of the customers were dissatisfied with the railway service on different fronts namely, catering, cleanliness and enquiry service but most of the customers were satisfied with the reservation arrangements, punctuality of trains and employees behaviour. Most of the complainants did not use the redressal service provided by the Railway departments. The reason cited by more than 60 per cent of them was that they did not expect any concrete action for their complaints from the Railways.
In an empirical research, N. Thanuligam et al. (1989) observed that 46.7 percent of consumers were aware of the consumer rights, 52.5 percent were aware of consumer protection measures and 42.5 percent were having the knowledge about the consumer protection council, whereas 3.33 percent of consumers had approached and made complaint to the councils but it indicated none of the consumers had membership in the consumer protection council.

Ragbir Singh (1989) identifies the following factors which are responsible for the slow growth of consumerism:

(a) Sellers do not try to visualize the problems from a consumer's viewpoint.

(b) The sorry state of affairs in our country is mainly due to lack of consumer education.

(c) The extent of protection provided by the legislations is inadequate.

(d) Lack of an organized consumer group has impeded the growth of consumer movement in India. They are heterogeneous and multiple and having overlapping and conflicting roles.

(e) Consumer action groups are urban based.

In a commentary, Satyen Mahapatra (1989) cited the scheme launched by the Delhi Administration in regard to the distribution of testing kits to some of the known consumer activists. But this scheme had some problems as noted the Consumer Upbhokta Samiti. The members were not given training as how to do the tests. Secondly, it required trained science graduate. Thirdly, the consumer activists were told by the Administrators that the results of the test were not fool proof and just indicated probable contamination and a final test on the items needed to be done by the Department itself.

Yoko Nakameram (1989) conducted a study on the effects of advertisements on school children. He concluded that parents and teachers should be first to be enlightened otherwise education of young children would not be effectively accomplished.

In an exploratory study on consumer attitudes towards consumerism conducted by Ragbir Singh (1990) it is noted that consumers are dissatisfied with the information provided by businessmen and most of the consumers are in favour of more
government regulations in the field of consumerism. At the same time consumers blame themselves for their carelessness or ignorance. They believe that consumer education is essential for the intensive consumerism and show more consciousness about environmental protection despite the costly products.

A survey among randomly selected 200 housewives of Parbhani (Maharashtra) town was conducted to find out the awareness of food adulteration among housewives by D.Murali et al. (1990). The findings indicated that a majority of housewives aware of food adulteration but they were not aware of harmful effects of adulteration on health and government actions to prevent food adulteration.

It is noticed in a consumer study carried out by K. Natarajan (1990) that awareness level was high and medium among 34.4 per cent and 55.56 percent of consumers respectively. It concluded that consumer awareness towards ISI mark was high and that the consumers had better awareness about ISI mark and its benefits and also that consumers had favourable attitude about the quality, performance and dependability of ISI mark goods.

A study was undertaken by P. Srikrishna Rao (1990). It is depicted in this study that the khammon forum created great awareness among consumers about their rights through interpreting the consumer rights and also bringing out publications of the decisions. This study further reveals that 62 percent of the complaints have got the appropriate relief and most of consumers are giving utmost importance to public cause rather than their personal grievances.

With the objective of examining the role of government agencies in consumer protection. A study was conducted by A.K. Dhyani et al. (1990). It notes that:

(1) The MRTPC if unable to keep pace with the complaints filed regarding Restrictive Trade Practices and Unfair Trade Practices.

(2) Similarly, in case of injunction/compensation, the number of applications under 12A and 12B of MRTP has increased over the years, but the rate of redressal is once again lagging far behind.

(3) There is 9-fold increase in cases processed during the year as compared to previous year.
(4) There is a record increase in adulteration, moreover the cases leading to acquittal is almost double that of convicted.

(5) In case of weights and measures laws violation less than 26 percent of cases led to prosecutions.

(6) The Delhi forum has processed more than 55 percent of complaints received while Dehradun forum has disposed over 60 percent complaints.

In an article *Government policies and the consumer interest* Dr. Siverami Reddy et al. (1990) has raised the pertinent questions regarding government policies with regard to the unethical and immoral trade practices which are not only in contravention to social well being of people but also detrimental to the public at large. He sorted out various such practices namely - Government of A.P. - levying life tax on motor vehicle and increase in the prices of dairy products. The decisions were so sudden that they created uproar in the State.

A. Saklani et al. (1990) carried out a survey on the attitude of present and future Indian executives towards consumer issues such as product standard, market practice etc. The findings revealed that executives were convinced about business failing in areas such as advertising, pricing and attitude towards consumer complaints.

In and article K.S. Haskot (1990) emphasises that a majority of senior citizens who constitute eight percent of our population, has the necessary time and talent, experience and expertise, to formulate and implement several welfare schemes. The most essential and urgent aspect of such schemes is the education and protection of citizens.

*From the studies given above, we can conclude the following:*

According to CSG Krishnamacharyulu et al. (1981), Arun.K.Kapoor et al. (1983), Surendra Gupta (1988), Anurag et al. (1989), most of the advertisements are misleading and do not provide adequate information about the product. They substantially affect the life of middle income group. Most of the advertisements do not substantiate their claims.

Another set of studies explore the developments in the consumer movement (D.A.R. Subramanyam et al. 1982; H.C. Chaudhary, 1987; N.Thanuligam et al. 1989; Ragbir Singh 1989; Ragbir Singh, 1990). They conclude that consumer has to care of
himself by forming consumer clout. They further assert that lack of governmental enforcement, deterioration in business ethics and consumer education are the main hindrance in the way of development of consumer movement and most of the Consumer organisations are urban based and playing overlapping and conflicting roles.

Arvind (1988), Promila and Harpreet (1989), A.K. Dhyani (1990). Siverami Reddy et al. (1990), P. Srikrishna Rao (1990), while studying the government irregularities in the functioning of government machinery conclude that government regulations are oftenly manipulated and violated by the traders for their own benefits. Government administrative policies are stoic to consumer interest. Satyen Mahapatra (1989) reports the basic flaws in the scheme launched by the Delhi Administration pertaining to the distribution of testing kit to the consumer activists.

In certain cases the functioning of government agencies are also far from satisfaction. Narain Singh et al. (1983) focused attention on the MRTP Act, he concludes that MRTP Commission was dominated by the Central government in most of the cases. MRTP Act did some work in the field of consumer protection by retaining certain practices. The Act needs certain basic changes in regard to certain definitions. A.K. Dhyani (1990) notes that the basic facilities were lacking in this Agency. Satchidanand Rath et al. (1983) states the grim problem of adulteration. The most of the provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 are ineffective and need certain amendments.

A.K. Dhyani et al. (1989) P. Srikrishna Rao (1990) find that most of the Consumer Councils are doing good job in regard to complaints resolution. They further note that the effective leadership is the main reason for its effectiveness.

A. Saklani et al. (1989), A. Saklani (1989) point out that 60 percent of consumers are dissatisfied with the present day products and get a little relief by way of complaining and most of the consumers shy away from complaining. Manubhai Shah (1989) shows that most of the complainants are conscious about the lodged complaint and complaints from various parties are also coming in a big way.

Promila and Harpreet (1989) notes that most of consumers do not use government redressal services and shrink from making complaints. Ragbir Singh (1990) points out that most of the consumers blame themselves for their ignorance.
V.V.Gopal and Krishna (1989) and K. Naterajan (1990), arrive at a conclusion that most of the consumers are not attentive to various information given on the packages. Most of consumers recognise and give importance to price factor and standard markings.

The studies by Abdul (1981), Anurag et al. (1989) and A. Saklani et al. (1990) conclude that businessmen give due importance to social responsibility and they admit that business are failing in certain areas such as advertising, pricing and attitude towards complaints settlement.

Rusi-B-Gimi (1988) reports that most of food articles are treated with harmful dyes. D. Murali (1990) points out that most of consumers have knowledge about the adulteration but do not aware of its harmful effect. K.S. Heskot (1990) emphasises that senior citizen can play a vital role in consumerism.

2.2 Consumer organisations

It is observed by S.N. Dugar (1976) that the MRTP Commission had inquired into 194 restrictive trade practices between 1970 and 1976. Out of these, only 2 per cent complaints were lodged by trade associations\consumer associations.

A study on Gujarat Electricity Board was undertaken by CERC as reported in *Power that Plunders* by Manubhai Shah (1978) in order to explore the causes of increasing the tariff. The study concluded that Board could raise resources and cut down the costs to the tune of Rs.19.25 crores from Rs.49.94 crores per annum by way of better performance, innovative inputs in the field of manpower management, transmission losses and plant utilization. The report also high-lighted the accounting irregularities running into 421.58 crores as observed by the Accountant General of Gujarat.

Consumer Organisations are also seeking complaints and their redressal. In a commentary by Subroto Sen (1979), it is noted that approximately half of the complaints handled by CGSI by 1979 were relating to household appliances. In some cases the consumer organisations came forward and initiated actions against the government for protecting the interests of consumers.

A couple of surveys have been conducted for studying the efficiency of public sector organisations. The CERC submitted a memorandum to the Government of India on the working of Gujarat State Road Transport (D.T.Trivedi et al., 1979). It
mentioned that in case GSRT discharged its duty to manage its operations efficiently and economically and on business principles then it could raise additional revenue and reduce costs ranging Rs.6.39 crores to Rs.14.92 crores per year. It is further revealed in this report that rural and urban traffic contributes 25 per cent and 1 per cent respectively to the State revenue, whereas State Government spends only 22.7 per cent on the road development in rural areas out of the proceeds collected from the rural traffic.

According to a critical study undertaken by CERC, GSRTC could not justify the increased fares. The CERC contested that GSRTC should not impose unjustified costs on the rural consumers for its inefficiency in the past (Arti Handa et al. 1981).

In another survey CERC probes into the working of Gujarat Electricity Board in the rural Sector. It concludes that rural areas frequently experienced power cut which not only disturbed their livelihood but also harmed their costly equipments besides this servicing was costly (Korah Mathen, 1981).

A study by CERC reveals that 50 per cent of expenses of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation were incurred on discretionary functions like parks while basic facilities like drains and sewerage system remained neglected (Rani Advani, 1981).

CERC conducted another study on procedural delays caused by government. It stated that government was mainly responsible for the concurrent delays in various phases of the proceedings enumerating the various occasions on which delays have been caused. It also highlighted the implications arising out of the judicial procedures within the country, changing the closed secretive and suspicious style of government working as well as redesigning the outdated information and control system within the government machinery with a view to speeding up development process and keeping a tight rein on the soaring costs of government machinery (Rahul Bhimjiani, 1981).

The focus of some studies has been on the consumer awareness. According to a survey conducted by CERC on consumerism; it was observed that consumers appreciated the strategy of CERC of seeking the legal remedy for various issues. It was further concluded that consumerism was gaining ground and consumers were becoming more conscious of the need for accountability of monopolistic organisations. Even though a number of laws are in vogue the producers do not follow various instructions and precautions which are made for the safety of the-consuming public.
Sometimes implementations as well as fixing of adequate norms on the part of government is also lacking (S. Malathesh, 1981).

CERC carried out a study on the inadequate information on OTC Analgesic Drugs. It was observed that most of the Drugs manufactures did not provide substantial information on the wrappers. It was also noted that about 95 per cent of the doctors described the information contained in the wrapper of analgesic OTC drugs inadequate for the layman (Kishore Jain et al. 1983).

A research study "Common Edible oil, adulteration, short weight measures and non availability through FPS" Under taken by Promod Kulkarni et al. (1983). It was found that the level of adulteration of oil with the groundnut oil remained undetected. 40 per cent because of inadequate of tests used by the government laboratories. So in this manner the consumers were cheated to the tune of Rs 2.50. per Kg. It also highlights the irresponsible attitude of government towards testing besides, having inadequate facilities for the said purpose and malpractices followed by the dealers of FPS.

A survey by the National Consumer Council of the United Kingdom revealed that for every complaint received, six serious and 20 to 25 has serious complaints are not communicated. The majority of consumers do not complain because, the complain is not worth the time and effort, the consumer does not believe the company will do anything about it (Consumer Current, 1983).

CERC pointed out, in a study on government efforts relating to the problems of drinking water in the tribal areas. That water supply was not in fact a major problem. The main problems of these areas were in the fields of employment, health and education. This study also highlighted the basic limitation relating to the norms for fixing standards for designing water supply scheme, settlement pattern, technology and improper way of feedback of the operations (Shobhana Riswadker, 1984). Certain consumer organisations are doing remarkable work in the field of consumer awareness and education. According to R.M. Basker (1985), CGSI has been doing a remarkable work in the field of consumer protection. It has created awareness among consumers with the help of publication and campaigning. The well known campaign was AGHAST. The campaign focused on the dangers caused by pesticides and fertilizers plants and malpractice in indulged by the drug companies, exploitation of women as a sexual objects in advertisements. It did excellent work in the area of product testing viz
adulteration in food stuff, clinical equipment and household appliances. But due to lack of funds, it could not give much publicity to its findings. According to Basker, if the CGSI has to be more effective, then it must raise funds, have talent and act more vigorously against unscrupulous manufacturer.

Some studies examined the "cash and carry" scheme for the supply of LPG cylinders. CERC undertook a study to highlight the dangers associated with LPG cylinder keeping the consumer Right to safety in mind and also the perceptions and attitudes of consumers and who adopted "cash and carry" scheme.

It was found that consumers were not satisfied with the safety provision in the LPG as they were not guided how to fit and use cylinder. In view of more delays experienced in home delivery, consumers preferred cash and carry scheme (Leena Chaturvedi, 1986).

The institute of Management Development and Research has also conducted a survey in the same year i.e. 1986 about "cash and carry" practice followed by the consumers of LPG in regard to a safety time and cost. It was noticed that most of consumers violated the safety measures. They have not only to wait for more time but have also to pay more prices in the form of unfruitful trips and physical efforts (Leena Chaturvedi et. al., 1986).

Some of the consumer organisations are doing remarkable work in the area of consumer protection. But due to various constraints these organisations have been restricted to a few activities. In an article Joyeeta Gupta (1987) makes the following observations. The growth of consumer movement was quite slow and uneven till 1980. Gujarat accounts for 45 per cent of the consumer groups whereas rural India which accounts for nearly 80 per cent of the population does not have a single consumer protection group. There are a few organisations which are involved in dissemination of information and education. The CERC and VOICE have involved in concrete actions. They are influencing policy decisions, raising questions in parliament, doing active research into various research subjects and invoking the law to protect the rights of consumers. However, the activities of most groups are limited to the extent of their resources, financial and manpower both in terms of number and commitment. Most consumer groups are financially weak, only four organisations have a budget of over Rs. one lakh a year. Nearly 55 per cent consumer groups have a budget of less than
Rs.1000 per year. Another weakness is that only one out of every five organisations in India receives grants from the State or Central government.

Common cause (1988) has also taken initiative to solve the problems of pensioners. It has got the discrimination caused by 1979 Pension Liberalisation Rules removed and has opened up new avenues of solutions for the problem of family pension.

CERC (1988) has affected two Acts through lobbying. The representation made on Railway Bill helped in persuading the Parliament to incorporate consumer provision in the Railway Bill. The outcome was the enactment of Railway claims Tribunals Act, 1987. Secondly Government of India decided to amend Sec.7 of the Hire Purchase Act 1972 and bring law into force. Consumer organisations are giving due importance to consumer safety and nutritive value in food articles. They have carried out various product tests and put the facts in front of public. According to R.B.L. Garg (1988) the adulteration of condiments such as turmeric and chilli powder in Karjat and other areas near Bombay, was observed to be as high as 75 per cent.

The Cyprus Consumer Association (CCA), investigated press reports that babies risk choking by using dangerous dummies. The dummy in question is a special type which has a protective plaque made of flexible rubber, rather than hard material (Consumer Currents, 1988).

Telcum powder, which is used all over the world, is not as refreshing as it is commonly believed to be, but a source of skin and lung diseases, according to a research report prepared by the Consumers Association (Consumer Current, 1988).

A test conducted by Consumer Organisations in the United States and Britain reported that certain model of, the popular, fourwheel-drive, Suzuki jeep showed a worrisome tendency to roll over when cornered sharply, even at speeds as low as 20 miles per hour (Louise Crosby, 1989).

With the increasing awareness among the consumers and consumer Organisations about the malpractices adopted by the traders, few organisation are taking up the samples and publishing the results of their tests. A Sarkar (1989) quoted the findings of Mahila Daskshata Samiti, a leading women's organisation in Delhi in which the Samiti observed that nearly 25 per cent samples of Vanaspati in Delhi were adulterated and the main source of adulteration was animal fats (20-30%).
A Sarkar (1989) further cites that Mahila Daskshata Society of Delhi carried out testing of sample of food stuff in 1989. It noted that 50 per cent samples of *garam masala* were adulterated or contained grit and harmful colouring matters. It was also observed that 'Amchur' was often found contaminated with insect infestation and even faeces.

On the complaint of P.K. Ghosh & VOICE (1989), MRTP was amended so that the consumer association or an individual consumer who lodges a complaint against business firms indulging in restrictive or unfair practice will have full legal rights to participate in the proceedings by way of providing evidence, cross-examining the witnesses, filing of application for discovery of documents etc.

Although in the 90's many consumer organisations have sprung up, but by and large they confined themselves to a few activities. A study on activities of consumer organisations was carried out by A.K. Dhyani et al. (1989). They received only 13 responses out of 250 consumer organisations. It was concluded from the survey that most of the organisations were carrying out a few activities like receiving complaints, holding seminars/workshops, contributing articles to newspapers, magazines etc. It further observed that only one organisation was dealing with product testing and most of the organisations did not have enough funds for their proper functioning.

The consumer wing of the Mahila Daskshta Samiti in its report states that some of the market showed prominence of adulteration in Khanpur, Patpargang, Mehrauli, Shahpur, Jat, Ashok Vihar among other market where the percentage of adulterations from the samples picked was about 30 to 40. The commodities in which adulteration was found mostly in tea leaves which were found to have used tea leaves, and species. The Mahila Daskshta Samiti claims that they sent nearly 150 samples to the prevention of food adulteration depot for action, giving details, but no action was reported by the concerned department about the follow up action was ever received in period between 1981-87 (Satyen, Mahapatra, 1990).

In some cases, organised move by consumer organisations have made some impact on the government machinery with continuous struggle and caused the government to take active recourse to certain mal-practices followed by traders. According to a report of common cause (1990), the MRTP Commission has banned the Brominated Vegetable Oil (BVO) which was found to be carcinogenic in soft
drinks like Limca. Thumps up etc. This ban was imposed on the initiation of consumer organisations like CUTS.

As a consequence of the intensive campaign by the Common Cause, the Government of India has notified that 'retail price' means maximum price at which the commodity in packed form may be sold to ultimate consumer. Where such price is mentioned on the package the words 'Maximum retail price-inclusive of all taxes should be printed' (common cause, 1990). The nature of complaints are changing. Not only complaints relating to adulteration but also about the government agencies are very frequent. CGSI (1990) Hyderabad branch undertook a study on the complaints profile. It arrived at the conclusion that out of the complaints received, 90 per cent were against Government agencies like - Education department (26 per cent), A.P. State Electricity Board (24 per cent) water works (.14 per cent), A.P. State Road Transport Corporation (10 per cent), Ration shops Employment (1 per cent) and acquisition offices (4 per cent). Although consumer organisations are doing yeomen service to the society despite the devoid of basis infrastructures, yet they could not redress cent per cent complaints.

Advantage consumers, an annual report of CPC, Rourekela, (1990) mentions that it could successfully redress about 55 per cent complaints out of 56. 19 complaints relating to refunding of booking advance could not be solved.

Reiterating the findings of a testing Committee A.R. Shenoy (1990) states that during the course of a year several sample of Tea powder (Loose), Oil, Chilly powder and Turmaric Powder were drawn from the various areas and tested. The percentage of adulteration found was 15 per cent, None, 46 per cent, and 40 per cent in the samples of tea powder (Loose), Oil Chilly powder and Turmeric powder respectively.

N.P. Srivastava et al. (1990), point out some basic problems faced by voluntary organisation viz. the vindicative attitude of erring traders, limited financial resources and non-availability of dedicated professional. It is suggested that more vigorous efforts are needed on the part of consumer organisations in order to solve the problems in various fields namely-consumer education, consumer advocacy, government regulation and policy etc.

The findings of various studies conducted to examine the functioning of consumer organisations are being summarised in the following paragraphs.
Studies conducted by S. Malethesh (1981), R.N. Baskar (1985), Joyeeta Gupta (1987), A.K. Dhyani \textit{et al.} (1989). N.P. Srivastava (1990) focus on the functions of consumer organisations. They conclude that consumerism is becoming popular among consumers and spreading over different parts in India. Consumers are more conscious about the accountability of monopolised organisation. Some of consumer organisations are testing the quality of products, creating consumer awareness, taking-up campaign on certain issues, providing redressal to the consumers etc. These studies further reveal that most of the organisations are experiencing problems regarding finance, manpower and lack of professional skill. They also observe lopsided development of consumer organisation and vindicative attitude of erring traders towards them.

In a study Kishore Jain \textit{et al.} (1983) notes that most the drugs manufacturers do not print required information as per government rules and regulations.

Consumer organisations are undertaking a variety of functions such as product testing, complaint handling and lobbying for pressurising the government for interfering in the business activity and business for amending its ways. Through lobbying consumer organisations are able to influence public opinion against the mal-practices followed by traders and government, lacunae in government rules and regulations and departments run by government as observed from the studies conducted by Common Cause, (1988). CERC, 1988, P.K.Ghose \textit{et al.} 1989, Common Cause, (1990).

Consumer organisations are also actively involved in solving consumer complaints. They record the fact that most of them are solved. Surotosen (1970), CPC (1990) and CGSI (1990) found that most of complaints are pertaining to household appliances. S.N. Dugar (1976) highlights the role of Consumer organisations in approaching MRTPC for the consumer cause.

Promod Kulkarni \textit{et al.} (1983), CGSI (1990), R.B.L. Garg (1988) A-Sarkar (1989 and Satyen Mahapatra (1990) observe that consumer organisations are providing test results to the consumers. It is further revealed that most of commodities are found adulterated. The degree of adulteration varies from product to product and place to place. Moreover, the Government departments are immune to such remedies. Even the malpractices are noticed in FPS and most of the time official shrug off their responsibilities.
Keeping in view the consumer safety in mind Leena Chaturvedi (1986) reports two studies which highlight the dangers associated with LPG and the problem with 'cash and carry' scheme and botheration which inevitably arise due to government's faulty scheme.


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