7.6 Scope for Further Research

Appendix 1 : Questionnaire

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The Indian market condition is witnessing a changing scenario. The change is so fast as compared to several preceding decades, which is evidence from the fact that the urban market to grow by 96% that is from Rs.1855 crores to Rs.3628 crores during 1984 and 1989 and the rural market to grow by 185% from Rs.733 crores to Rs.2083 crores between the same periods.\(^1\)

Indian consumer is much pathetic in the sense that he is to get his money’s worth from a well organized seller. In view of lack of organized group among the consumers, consumers are frequently cheated, fleeced and exploited. In developed countries, because of the existence of factors such as growing competition, increasing purchasing power the buyer dominates the market. In contrast to this situation it is seller who dominates the market in India in view of comparatively poor purchasing power, less supply and lack of organized efforts to protect the interests of consumers.

Goods are produced and services are provided with the ultimate object of satisfying the consumer wants. In a fare economy, it is the consumers who determine what goods are to be produced, they influence the prices and determine where, when, and how goods and services are to be marketed. Therefore, the consumers not only determine the income of business but also directly influence its success and survival. The goodwill of the consumers is often a critical factor in the success of a business. Consumer satisfaction can be ensued if a consumer is protected against monopoly and

\(^1\) Advertising and Marketing: Volume III issue VII dated OCT 1991 Page No.96
restrictive trade practices. In a competitive economy like India, it is the consumers who decide the success or failure of business, either by buying or not buying the product. This idea underlines the concept of ‘consumer sovereignty’ which is accepted as modern marketing concept. This is reflected in the well-known pronouncements of modern authors, such as ‘Consumer is the king’, ‘Production of business is to create the customer’, ‘Production is the means and consumption is the end’ and so on. But in practice, it is not so, as the consumers are exploited in every accessible way by the business community.

The cardinal objective of any production activity is consumption. “Consumption is the sole end purpose of all production”. As such, Consumer serve as the basis for many activities performed by businessmen. Every one is consumer wherever they live and whatever activities they pursue irrespective of their Age, Sex, Colour and Creed.

Consumer form the main part of the economic cycle of the country because other developmental activities around them. He is always right and can do no harm. He is the central point of all our economic activities. His community is the largest economic group in any country. He wields enormous power in the market. He can control production by deciding not to purchase a particular product. By their collective action, consumers can regulate production, distribution and consumption.

The purpose of the business is to create consumers.

There is a general feeling among consumers that they are mercilessly exploited, their rights are not completely recognized and their interests are not properly safe-guarded. When they buy products/services, they expect them to be as good as their money. They expect the seller to follow fair trade practices, sell quality goods and services at reasonable prices and those goods are free from adulteration and pollution, they also expect that after sales services and genuine warranties are to be offered by the seller. They want concrete steps to protect their rights and interests. The ordinary consumer doesn’t possess the skill, quality, capacity and competence for choosing quality goods at reasonable prices.
All trading, business and the industrial activities revolve around the consumer, without whom the manufacturer and the seller can not exist, subsist, develop or flourish. The term “Consumer” implies one who consumes. It may be commodities which he buys or the services which he pays for, thus every individual is a consumer in his capacity as a buyer of commodities or services. In the modern economic and social scenario, the consumer is accorded sovereign status and the business activities revolve around him.

But in reality the consumer is not recognized as the king. He is exploited by the producers, wholesalers, retailers and others. The main reason behind this exploitation of the consumer is their heterogeneous character. It is very difficult to organize them. At the same time the sellers are well organized and their objectives coincide. Naturally the consumers become the victim in the competitive world and they are subject to all kinds of exploitations.

Consumers of today are generally ignorant, ill-informed, unorganized and isolated. When they awake and unite irrespective of caste, creed, and status as human beings, they can protect effectively their own interest against unfair practices.

The consumers expect correct weights and measures, reasonable prices for the products, unadulterated goods and after sale service. Finally, every consumer expects from sellers that they should not resort to anti-social activities such as hoarding, profit earning, black marketing and deceitful practices.\(^2\)

Every consumer has problems at the time of buying a product and availing of services. It is difficult for the consumer to judge the quality of products and services in the market. The information about the products and services that are offered may be misleading and confusing. The number of brands of various items complicates the selection and some sellers suppress pertinent information

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about their products and services. The conflicting claims about the products and services add to the confusion. There is a tendency for some one to buy goods on the basis of emotion rather than the consideration of factual data. The consumer lack of education and knowledge to judge what is the best to buy and it is too complex for the average consumer to evaluate the myriad conflicting claims of competing manufacturers.

The manifestations of consumer neglect are evident in the adulterated food we eat, the spurious unsafe and sub-standard products we buy. The repeated shortage of essential commodities accompanied by black marketing and profiteering, sale of hazardous drugs banned in most countries in the west, unethical and manipulative advertisements and the humiliation, indignity and harassment that are common occurrences in the public sector organization such as railways, road transport corporation, nationalized banks, the telephone department, power board, insurance companies and hospitals. Despite the volume of legislation holding the promise of consumer protection and an array of Government departments specifically constituted to implement these laws for the interest of the consumers, the consumer has not been protected.

The consumer movement is still in its infancy in the country. The various legal and administrative measures taken by the Government need to be supplemented by a strong consumer protection movement in the country. This social movement has to be developed on a voluntary basis through greater participation of a voluntary consumer organization. However the activities of these organizations are confined to cities and towns and the movement is yet to take firm root in rural areas.

Consumerism is a social movement to safeguard the rights and powers of the consumers at large, in relation to sellers. Ralph Nadar, the pioneer in consumer protection movement in 1960s and 1970s described consumerism as society’s right to quality of life and it is towards protection, preservation and enhancement of human life. Consumerism involves rational purchasing and freedom from economic exploitation by merchants.
It was in 1962 that the US President John F. Kennedy defined four basic consumer rights namely the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose and the right to be heard over the years. The International Organization of Consumer Union (IOCU) has added three more rights, the right to redress, the right to a healthy environment and the right to consumer education.

The concept of consumer movement is very much associated with the marketing functions of business. In most of the cases Indian Marketing is seller oriented, yet the average Indian consumer continues to be poor, illiterate, ignorant, apathetic or just defeatist at the receiving end. The reasons are obvious 40% of the population is surviving below the poverty line and more than 48% of the people are absolutely illiterate. In such circumstances, it is impossible to think of President Kennedy’s four basic rights of consumers.

The increase in volume of International trade and commerce has brought in the need for consumer protection movement all over the globe. The twentieth century saw the growth of consumer protection movement in several countries appreciably. The consumer protection in developing countries has become more of a necessity than of academic interest. At present several legislative enactments, consumer courts, consumer Associations, media publications and advertisements about the consumer rights have accelerated the consumer protection movement at a faster pace.


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1969. In all these Acts, though remedies were available, it is expensive and time consuming and hence rarely involved by the consumers.

Indian Constitution has provided Articles 38 and 47 which aim at Protection of the welfare of the people, raising the level of nutrition, Standard of living and improving Public health, these were only directive Principles of state Policy and acted only as guidelines for rulers. To alleviate all these practical difficulties, the Indian Parliament finally enacted the consumer protection Act 1986 which came into force from 1st July 1987. The Act is comprehensive, and an additional Legislature which gives simple, speedy and inexpensive remedy for consumer grievances.

Consumer Courts were established at each District level, State level and at National level and a consumer corpus fund was also created to provide financial assistance to non Governmental consumer organizations. “The 15th March of every year is celebrated as Consumer Rights Day. The goods and services were brought within the ambit of consumer protection Act. The Consumer Protection Amendment 1993 was enacted with certain modifications and additions. The consumer welfare fund was also instituted in 1994 to promote voluntary organizations to spread consumer education.

Consumer rights are human rights and they are recognized as the fundamental rights of the consumers. When these rights are denied, there will be strong protest against the abuses which will result in the formation of consumer forums as laid down in the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. An in-depth study of the legal system and voluntary consumer organizations is the need of the hour in India. In a country like India, where majority of the people are subject to base poverty and misery, because of ignorance, illiteracy, social backwardness, lack of social awareness and a passive outlook on life, there is a great need to protect consumers from the exploitation of the traders.
1.2. Statement of the Problem

“A Customer is the most important visitor to business premises. Business Enterprises are not doing him a favour; he is doing them a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so.” Mahatma Gandhi⁴.

Philip Kotler defines consumerism as “a social movement seeking to augment the rights and powers of the buyers in relation to sellers”. Consumerism is a battle against exploitation. It is the collective endeavour of the consumers to protect their interest. It is a means of ascertaining their rights against the sellers. The Indian consumers in general are not aware of their rights. In India 47.8 percent of consumers are illiterate⁵. They are exploited in various ways like adulteration, duplication, false advertising and selling at a high price. It is estimated that the Indian consumers are cheated to the tune of Rs.2000/- crores annually through various devices invented by the clever businessmen and traders⁶.

Consumerism is a social force to make business more honest, efficient and responsible. It also pressurizes the Government to adopt necessary legal measures to protect the interest of the consumers. It is basically a protest movement. Producers and traders have organized associations to promote and protect their interests. Consumers may be deceived in various ways by unscrupulous businessmen including traders, dealers, producers and manufacturers as well as service providers. Some of the following unfair practices must have come to everyone’s notice sometime or the other:

- Adulteration that is, adding something inferior to the product being sold. This is a practice we come across in the case of cereals, spices, tea leaves, edible oil, petrol and the like.
- Sale of spurious products, that is selling something of no value instead of the real product. This is often found in the case of medicines and drugs or health care products.

⁴ Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, “Ideal status of Consumer”, 1937.
⁵ The Census of India 1991
• Use of false weights and measures is another malpractice which some traders adopt while selling the goods. Goods which are sold by weight (kg) like vegetables, cereals, sugar, etc those sold by measures (meter) like textile fabrics, suit pieces, are sometimes found to be less than the actual weight or length.

• Sale of duplicates, that is, goods that indicates a mark which shown it is of superior quality than what it actually is.

• Hoarding and black-marketing is another problem that consumer often face. When any essential commodity is not made available in the open market and stocks are intentionally held back by dealers it is known as hoarding. Its purpose is to create and artificial scarcity, to push up the prices. Black marketing is the practice of selling hoarded goods, secretly at higher price.

• Buyers of durable consumer goods are sometimes required to buy some other goods as a pre-condition to sale or may be required to pay after-sales service charges for one year in advance. One might have known about tying up of new gas connections with the sale of gas stoves(burners).

• Offering gifts having no additional value, or coupons to collect a gift on the next purchase of some product are practices aimed at alluring consumers to buy a product. Often gifts are offered after the price of the product on sale has been increased. Dealers also announce contests or lottery among buyers of a product without the intention of awarding any prize.

• Misleading advertisement is yet another practice by which consumers are deceived. Such advertisements falsely represent a product or service to be of superior quality, grade or standard.

• Sale of sub-standard goods do not conform to prescribed quality standard. The consumers are exploited not only by the Private enterprises but also by the Public enterprises such as Banks, State Electricity Boards, Tele Communication, Passenger road transport, Railways and the like.
Many number of laws passed to protect the interest of the Consumers. The role of Government is to implement the Consumer Protection Laws strictly. But there is large scale exploitation is often find even in Public sector undertaking. The necessity of adopting measures to protect the interest of consumers mainly due to their helpless position and the unfair business practices. In many developed countries consumers enjoy more protection as compared to Indian consumers. Even educated consumers are lured into buying undesirable and unnecessary goods. There is a constant conflict between desires – prompted wants and need based requirements and therefore, the consumer is at a ‘Special risk while taking market decisions’.

Unfair trade practices go unchecked and they cause serious damage to the health and wealth of the consumers. Consumer attitude and choice are not prompted by any kind of awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities. Besides consumer protection laws, the Government of India has taken various steps to inform, to guide, and to educate consumers on their rights. The eight rights envisaged in the Consumer Protection Act 1986 such as the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose, the right to be heard, the right to seek redressal, the right to consumer education, right to healthy environment, and right to basic needs are comprehensive and exhaustive in the consumer protection is concerned.

There is a legal maxim “ignorantia juris non-excusat, ignorantia vacit exacts” as which means “ignorance of law does not excuse, ignorance of facts excuses”. Therefore awareness of various protective laws is a precondition for the proper utilisation of the laws and effective realization of the goals behind them. Consumers may have physiological and psychological barriers. These barriers along with other socio-economic factors may influence the level of awareness of consumer protection laws among the consumers. There may also be a degree of variation even among the consumers with the same level of awareness, with regard to attitudes of consumer movement.

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The consumer movement towards consumer protection is expected in every nook and corner of our Nation. There are certain agencies to redress the consumer grievances. The researcher wants to assess how effectively such agencies functioning to redress the grievances in the study area. The Consumer protection movement in Metropolitan cities and in few important cities is performing very successfully. The consumer protection movement in other towns is not in the appreciable level.

Dindigul is one of the important Business town and ‘A’ grade Municipality in Tamil Nadu. This town has got potentiality in all respects, but the consumers’ protection movement in this town is very poor at low level due to several reasons. There are many hindrances to the growth of a strong consumer movement in Dindigul. Several measures have been taken by the Government and Non-Government Organisations and Consumers Association in Dindigul town to launch strong consumer movement. Inspite of all these measures, the consumer movement in Dindigul is still in its infancy stage. The consumer movement in Dindigul is to be developed strongly in order to protect the rights of the Dindigul consumers. In order to develop strong consumer movement in Dindigul, the consumers should have awareness about their rights and their attitude should be positive to protect their rights by making complaints against their exploitation and get redressal through several Agencies. Hence, the researcher has proposed to study the “Consumers Protection Movement in Dindigul Town – A study on Consumer Awareness and Attitude towards consumer movement”.

1.3. Review of Literature

“Understanding the past is a prerequisite for anticipating the future”.  

Consumer Protection activities are in practice around the world for a long time. The origin of this concept in India also goes back to many decades. Quite a number of legislations have been enacted long ago in India. Even then an average consumer has not been able to enjoy the benefits of

8 I.M. Ponday and Ramnath Bhat.
these statutory enactments. As a matter of fact, access to justice so far has been a luxury for most of
the Indian citizens. However, with the enactment of The Consumer Protection Act 1986, the
consumers’ rights are protected. The successful implementation of the said Act has considerably
consolidated the process of consumer protection in India and has given rise to new consumer
jurisprudence. By considering the importance of consumer protection, quite a large number of studies
covering different aspects of consumer protection have been undertaken by individual researchers
and institutions.9

Consumer protection has been a fascinating topic today. Researchers have been continuously
studying the various dimensions of consumerism. This study is an attempt to analyse the consumer
protection movement in Dindigul Town. Several research works dealing with protection, guidance,
education, psychology, behavior, legislation, rights and awareness of consumer were carried out in
foreign countries and in India. Brief reviews of such studies are presented in this chapter.

Rayudu (1980)10 stated that the consumers are facing many artificial problems and he stressed
the need for the information of consumer associations at various levels to protect poor, illiterate and
vulnerable sections of the society through such organization.

Sahu (1981)11 observed that the Indian consumers are facing numerous problems. These
accentuated problems are due to illiteracy, ignorance, and lack of awareness of the majority of Indian
customers about their rights.

Subramaniay,et a; (1982)12 conducted a study in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh and
concluded that there is a need for the establishment of consumer organizations and consumer

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12 Subramaniyam,et a.; (1982): need for Consumer Organizations, Indian Journal of Marketing, Vol-XII(May-
June), pp.17-20.
councils. The study observes that nearly 66 percent of the customers believed that the consumers themselves have to take initiative rather than looking for somebody else to rescue them.

Pramod Kulkarni et al. (1983) in their research study have found out that the level of adulteration of groundnut oil remained undetected because of inadequate testing facilities in the Government laboratories. Thus the consumers are cheated to the tune of Rs.2.50 per kg. They have also highlighted the irresponsible attitude of the Government towards testing besides; having inadequate facilities for the said purpose and malpractices followed by the dealers of fair price shops.

Satchidanand Rath and Gaut, K.D. (1983) in their study on a critical Review of Nature of Liability under The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act have stated that the percentage of adulteration in case of milk products are 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 spices. They have also pointed out that adulteration was rampant more in the urban areas than in the rural areas and mostly vendors are indulged in such type of activities rather than manufacturers, stockists and distributors. Finally they have insisted the need for efficient and incorruptible machinery to look after these evil effects.

Joyeeta Gupta (1986) has stated that ignorant Indian consumers are cheated in an environment of limited choice, inadequate supplies, incomplete information, and unlimited demand. The author has concluded that imposing rules and regulations will have no use if consumers themselves do not believe in the utility of these regulations.

Joyeeta Gupta (1987)\textsuperscript{16} makes the following observation. The growth of consumer movement was quite slow and uneven till 1980. Gujarat accounts for 45 percent of the consumer groups. There are a few organizations like Consumer Education Research Centre and VOICE which have involved in concrete actions. They are influencing policy decisions, raising questions in parliament, doing active research in various subjects and invoking the law to protect the rights of the consumer. However, the activities of most of the groups are limited to the extent of their resources, financial and manpower both in terms of number and commitment.

A study about the activities of the consumer organization was carried out by Dhyani et al. (1989)\textsuperscript{17} they received only 13 responses out of 250 consumer organizations. It was concluded from the survey that most of the organizations were carrying out only few activities like receiving complaints, conducting seminars / workshops, contributing articles to the newspapers, magazines etc., It was further observed that only one organization was dealing with product testing and most of the organizations did not have enough funds for proper functioning.

Promila and Harpreet (1989)\textsuperscript{18} conducted a study on an image test in order to gauge the image of the railway passenger service among the public. According to their findings, most of the customers are dissatisfied with the railway service on different fronts namely, catering, cleanliness and enquiry service. Most of the complainants do not use the redressal service provided by the railway departments. The reason cited by more than 60 percent of them is that they can not expect any concrete action for their complaints from the railways.

Srinivasan and Sakthivel Murugan (1990)\textsuperscript{19} in their article on Role of Voluntary Organizations in Promoting Consumerism have explained the ways in which consumers are misled and cheated.

\textsuperscript{19}Srinivasan and Sakthivel Murugan(1990): Role of Voluntary Organisations. Indian Management, pp.10-11
They have emphasized the importance of consumer organizations to protect the interest of the consumers.

Chandran Bala (1992)\(^{20}\) in his study on the Functional Role of Voluntary Organization and Consumer Protection has started that the consumer organizations should be authorized to analyse or test the sample of goods in the interest of the consumers.

Joga Rao (1993)\(^{21}\) explained that with the passage of time consumers in India have become aware of the helpless situation in which they are placed and have started organizing themselves slowly, though the consumer movement has not reached its zenith in India. They have associated themselves with voluntary organizations and various other non-Government organizations and made a hue and cry stressing their need for protection to which the parliament ultimately enacted the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Renu Arora (1995)\(^{22}\) added that consumers are confronted with numerous problems due to lack of knowledge or awareness of rights and enactments made by the Government. The Consumer doesn’t exercise his rights as a consumer. To eradicate such ignorance and make the consumer a better buyer and safeguard his interest from the malpractices of businessmen, no measure can be more effective than consumer education. He opined that it is the first right and the duty of the consumers.

\(^{20}\) Chandran Bala (1992): Functiona Role of The Voluntary Organisations and Consumer Protection, Jaipur University, Jaipur.


Srivastava (1995)\textsuperscript{23} conducted a study in order to probe into problems of consumerism and concluded that the consumers are not much aware of their rights and other issue. Hence, he felt that this is a limiting factor in consumer movement.

Bajracharya (1998)\textsuperscript{24} in his study, observed that consumer in India are more organized than in Nepal and hence the number of consumer organizations here are much larger. Moreover, Nepalese consumers are not aware enough to get united for class action. His study also revealed that the factors discouraging consumers from taking remedial action are mainly of a legal nature and pertaining to consumers’ self-constraining behaviour. Prominent among these are consumers’ indifferent attitude (74 percent), lack of faith in legislative measures (73.6 percent), avoiding involvement in disputes (72.8 percent), lack of time (68 percent) and consumers’ lethargic attitude (56.6 percent).

Selvadas (1998)\textsuperscript{25} in his study on Consumer Protection Movement in Kerala assessed the functions and problems of the voluntary consumer organizations and concluded that those organizations are performing significant functions in promoting consumer movement in Kerala. He has also made an attempt to assess the perception of consumers with regard to the consumer protection movement and a change in the attitude of the business community, since the enactment of The Consumer Protection Act 1986. He concluded that consumers’ interests were not well protected till the enactment of The Consumer Protection Act 1986, where as the business community is more vigilant in protecting the interests of consumers after the enactment of the above mentioned legislation. He also made suggestions to popularize the consumer movement in Kerala.

Marilyn Nagy (1976)\textsuperscript{26} pointed out in the study that majority of the respondents supported the idea of the consumer education courses for adults and high school students. They also supported

\textsuperscript{23} Srivastava, A.K., Consumerism in India and some developed countries, Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Allahabad, 1995
\textsuperscript{26} Marilyn Nagy( 1976): Consumers Attitude Towards the prevention and Resolution of Consumer
the government’s role as a provider of consumer information. He felt that business should provide better quality products which require less service, even if they cost more, replace defects in warranty products, provide stringent legislations at the federal level so that the defaulters could not escape from the prosecution.

Kamaraju Panthulu (1978)\(^{27}\) emphasizes the principle factors that contribute to consumer movement in India. One of the main causes is the increasing level of awareness among the consumers. The awareness is shown by (1) The presence of organized consumer groups, (2) consumer protection legislation and (3) journalistic exposure of business behaviour reflecting abuse of consumer’s interest.

Reddy and Murthy (1978)\(^{28}\) concluded that consumers have to play a major role in protecting themselves from the clutches of the businessmen. First of all they must know their rights as consumers. Secondly, they should not hesitate to exercise their right. Thirdly, consumers must inculcate the spirit of cooperation and self-help. Fourthly, consumers must be aware of all the laws which are enacted by the Government in this regard. But the consumers are not aware of their rights and responsibilities as consumers. They opined that consumer organizations must educate the consumers and make them alert and vigilant citizens.

Morganstern and Stanley (1978)\(^{29}\) have given a brief description of various works carried out by the Federal, the State and the Local Government in USA to improve the consumer protection and a list of consumer protection agencies and legislative enactments which cover a vast area of consumer protection.


\(^{29}\) Morganstern and Stanley. 1978. Legal Protection for the Consumer. Yew York: Oceana publication
Arthur Alan et al. (1979) stated that many consumer protection problems are the consumers' information problems. They further stated that the government regulation of product qualities is compared with government regulations of information about qualities as alternative consumer protection measures. It was argued that product regulation may generate the net social gains when the consumers may be truly informed, but it can not, in general, restore efficiency to the economy while some policy of information regulation can restore efficiency but it may be beneficial to the people who are in the higher income groups.

Donna Ruth (1980) in his study stated that there was a significant relation between consumers' willingness to accept responsibility for self-protection and their attitude towards regulation and education. There was also a relationship between consumers' knowledge about regulation and their attitude towards self-protection.

Malathesh (1981) in his study on “Consumerism – An opinion survey” observed that consumers appreciated the strategy of Consumer Education Research Centre for seeking the legal remedy for various issues. In his study he has stated that consumerism is gaining ground and consumers are becoming more conscious of the need for accountability of monopolistic organizations. He has further stated that 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.

Rayudy (1983) states that the consumer should have knowledge on wide fields of mercantile practices like legal protection available, exaggerated advertisements, price variations, substitutes, fair and unfair practices, short weights and measures and price policies of Government. But the

percentage of literacy is very low in our country. He cannot afford to know the matters relating to market because of various known reasons of his way of life. He opined that consumer co-operative societies are an effective instrument of consumer resistance against the exploitation.

Sudaimuthu (1983)\textsuperscript{34} stated that a considerable section of the consuming public is not aware of its rights as consumers in India are highly disorganized. All these factors create conducive environment for the business community to adopt malpractices, which are detrimental to the consumer’s interest.

Rama Rao (1984)\textsuperscript{35} expressed his opinion that the consumer himself is partly responsible for exploitation, since he is unaware of his rights. The majority of the Indian consumers are being apathetic, ignorant, non-price conscious, irrational, fond of bargaining without information about product/quality etc., have remained unprotected. The main reason for such a state of affairs is lack of education and rational thinking among consumers.

Joyeeta Gupta (1986)\textsuperscript{36} made a study on Consumerism. Emerging challenges and opportunities. Consumer movement in our country had been gaining momentum in the recent past. A number of consumer centers came up all over the country, mostly education-oriented, while some were action-based. The author described the implications of the rising consumer awareness for the managers, for the policy-makers and for the consumers themselves. However, the author said that it should be realized that imposing rules and regulations from above is likely to have little effect, if consumers themselves do not believe in the utility of these regulations. Thus, education and awareness must accompany the process of making regulations and legislations. In fact, consumer education and dissemination of information should form part of any policy to help the consumer. He

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stated that not only labeling information on drugs and packaged commodities is required, but also awareness among consumers as to what these ingredients are and what are the benefits and problems associated with them should be there. He said that business, consumers and government live on each other, live off each other and because of each other. Producers and the government are merely means to consumer satisfaction. Therefore in any development process, it is important that both the consumers and the producers work together in the attainment of their goals.

Vijendar Kumar Aggarwal (1986) made a critical study of the existing provisions of the MRTP Act, 1969 relating to restrictive trade practices and consumer protection. He stated that consumer protection is a vast field in which a number of legislations had been enacted. He confined his study to restrictive and unfair trade practices. Nevertheless, a limited reference to the provisions of monopolistic trade practices, wherever required, had been made. Analysis had been made with the help of the case law. Throughout this study, the important decisions of the MRTP Commission and courts, wherever relevant have been referred to, analysed and evaluated. The author concluded that it is necessary to strengthen the infrastructure of the commission and also to establish a few regional offices with adequate staff and other resources in order to effectively protect the public interest and the consumers’ interest. It was suggested that the commission should have power to punish for contempt. He suggested creating independent state level department of consumer protection with exclusive functions of monitoring and reporting restrictive and unfair trade practices to the commission. Finally, he emphasized the need for a comprehensive consumer protection code aiming at the protection of the consumers from the monopolistic, restrictive and unfair trade practices of the business community and for achieving the economic and social justice.

Neelakanta and Ananda (1987) explained that the consumer world over is being exploited either by the producer of goods and services or by the distributor. He stated that the only solution would be educating consumers to develop vigilant attitude among them and protect them from shoddy market practices. He stressed the need for individual, collective and international consumer vigilance to overcome the producer or seller’s exploitation.

Om Narain (1987) opined that the Government could be a best catalytic agent for creating proper atmosphere and environment for consumer awareness among the masses. A strong effective and popular consumer movement is the need of the hour in which all sectors of the community will have to take active interest.

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

Gurbax Singh (1989) has given an exhaustive commentary on the Indian consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the Central Consumer Protection Rules, 1987. He provides a list of consumer product testing laboratories and voluntary consumer organizations. He has observed that the new trend has already made a tremendous impact upon the emerging concept of consumer movement throughout the country. He has also highlighted the role of various International Institutions in the field of consumer protection.

Raghbir Singh (1989) made a study on Consumer Education. He has stated that Indian consumer’s malady is his ignorance about fraud, price, product risk and product quality. Consumerism as a social movement is emerging slowly in India. Accelerated consumer education on an extensive scale reaching even rural illiterate is the imperative need of the hour. Unfortunately, the various consumer rights, and the legislations to protect the consumer rights which appear very promising, find their place only on paper and a large section of consumers are not aware of their rights and laws. The author concluded that to create awareness about the consumer movement, there is an urgent need for both formal and informal consumer education.

Koteeswara Rao (1990) has mentioned that The Consumer Protection Act could not be successful unless the consumer himself is aware of his rights and responsibilities.

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

Natarajan (1990) conducted a study on Consumer’s Awareness towards ISI mark. It was observed that the awareness level is high and medium among 34.4 percent and 55.56 percent of the consumers respectively. It was further observed that the consumers have favourable attitude about the quality and the performance of ISI marked goods.

Garg O.P.\textsuperscript{46} has critically examined the position of the consumer under the American, British, Ireland, Finland and Swedish laws in comparison with the Indian consumers under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986. He has pointed out the role played by national and international consumer organizations in the area of consumer protection.

In an exploratory study on Consumers’ Attitude towards Consumerism conducted by Ragbir Singh (1990)\textsuperscript{47} it is noted that consumers are dissatisfied with the information provided by businessman 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.

Rajendra Kumar Nayak (1991)\textsuperscript{48} has visualized that the consumer himself is a guardian of his own rights and has criticized the behaviour of Indian consumers holding them responsible for their exploitation. On the legal front, he has noted pessimistically that whatever legislations are in India to protect the interest of consumers they are not enforced properly so as to control and eliminate the deceptive activities and practices of sellers. He has argued that that the legislative enactments aimed at protecting the consumer interests are yet to become instruments of positive action in redressing the consumer grievances. He has dealt with the problems of the consumers’ from a historical perspective, tracing the history of the movement and the legislative measures undertaken in India. He has also discussed the role of the government in consumer protection and has examined the issues like implied warranty and merchantable quality, food adulteration, identification of unfair trade practices and civil and criminal protection of consumers. He has made useful suggestions like the

\textsuperscript{48} Rajendrakumar Nayak(1991) : Consumer Protection Law in India – An Eco Legal Treatise on Consumer Justice, Mumbai: Tripathi Private Ltd.
establishment of a consumer ombudsman and a separate ministry to look into the affairs of the consumers.

**Rengaswamy (1992)** in his study on Consumer Protection under the Existing Acts with reference to Essential Consumer Goods has pointed out the various forms of exploitation of consumers by manufacturers and traders. He has evaluated the effectiveness of the existing legal mechanism in consumer protection. Finally, he has offered valuable suggestions to enhance consumer protection.

**Bhagirathi Panigrahi (1992)** concluded that in spite of the plethora of measures, legislative and administrative; the consumer protection still remains a myth. The consumer is exploited quite often. He is helpless and is an easy prey in the hands of the commercial and industrial leviathans wielding economic and political power. In a society such as ours, with the bulk of illiterate people still suffering from abject poverty, the battle for consumer protection has to be fought on different fronts. The effectiveness of the consumer protective legislation would be diminished, if the consumers are aware of their rights and remedies. So the mass media education of the consumers is very much necessary to make them conscious of their rights and legislative measures.

**Shrinivas Gupta (1992)** describes the consumer protection legislative measures in the country. He opined that the reason behind the inability to change over from a seller’s market to a buyer’s market is the lack of awareness on the part of the consumers themselves of their rights and remedies. He further added that most of the consumers are still not aware of their rights and various laws which have been enacted to safeguard their rights and interests.

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Akram (1994)\textsuperscript{52} described that consumerism in our country has not yet reached the taken off stage. It is because a large number of Indian consumers are poor, ignorant, illiterate, ill-informed and unorganized. In order to check this unhappy state of affairs, it is very important to educate consumers about their rights and the remedies available to them.

In a study conducted by Chandra and Patel (1994)\textsuperscript{53} it was found that the awareness among students about consumer protection laws was generally low. It was observed that a majority of students (50.7 percent) scored below the mean. However, the awareness among the second and third year students was on a equal footing. Even the students from families with legal educational background were found to be unaware of the consumer rights. The study revealed that legal awareness among the undergraduate students was far inadequate and extra efforts were needed to increase the awareness.

Gulshan S.V. (1994)\textsuperscript{54} has described the status of Indian consumers and their problems. The details about Redressal Forums at the district, State and National levels and some important decisions of those three forums affecting consumers are also mentioned.

Girishchand Jeswal (1996)\textsuperscript{55} in his study on Consumer Protection in India – Consumer Awareness and Functioning of Consumer Associations and Redressal Agencies has made an attempt to find out the level of awareness of the respondents about consumer protection measures at Chandigarh. He has analysed whether there is any significant relationship between the demographic variables (sex and educational qualification) and the awareness level. The sample was urban based. The researcher had concluded that the overall awareness level of male respondents was found to be

better than the female respondents and there is a positive correlation between educational qualification and the level of awareness.

**Gurjeet Singh** (1996)\(^{56}\) has highlighted the role of Central and State Consumer Protection Councils established under the Act and the use of non-legal measures for consumer protection like consumer education, representation, lobbying, boycotts and international co-ordination. He has also described the functions of redressal mechanism established under the Act and discussed the various problems of consumer protection in India.

In his study, **Bhashyam** (2000)\(^{57}\) sought to examine the working of the consumer forums in Andhar Pradesh and the extent of the consumer awareness about the provisions of the consumer protection Act. The study revealed that among the urban respondents, 82 percent were aware of the provisions of The Consumer Protection Act and the remaining 18 percent did not have any awareness about the Consumer Protection legislation. Among the rural consumers, 68 percent of the respondents were found to be aware of The Consumer Protection Act and 32 percent were not. Moreover 78 percent of the 175 urban respondents and 77 percent of the 225 rural respondents were found to be aware of their rights as consumers. Income-wise analysis of the study revealed that while 37.2 percent of the respondents from very low income group got to know about the consumer protection Act form television. People form the middle-income and high-income groups got the relevant information from newspapers and magazines. Among the illiterate groups, 50 percent came to know about the Act through radio and from the neighbours and friends.

**Sivaprakasam and RajaMohan** (2002)\(^{58}\) in their study on consumer Empowerment- Rights and Responsibilities made an attempt to study the awareness and the attitude of the rural and the


urban consumers on the consumer protection measures. In the study it has been stated that nearly
two-thirds of the rural consumers and 83 percent of urban consumers were aware of their rights.
Urban consumers were more aware of their rights when compared to their counterparts in the rural
areas. The study also appraises the legal measures taken by the government for the consumer
protection and suggested suitable measures for proper implementation of The Consumer Protection
Act and effective functioning of the Redressal Forums.

Ansari (1980)\(^59\) states that the number of federating consumer organizations is quite small.
This calls for ceaseless efforts to organize new consumer societies in the urban and rural areas. The
movement can take the shape of a mass movement only when there is mass participation in the
consumer activities by a significant proportion of the consumers in the country.

Prakash Vir (1993)\(^60\) conducted a survey on consumers opinion about the effectiveness of the
various Consumer Redressal Forums set-up under The Consumer Protection Act. The survey revealed
that very few consumers (11.7 percent) viewed them as very effective, whereas 13.8 percent of them
had found the Forums as quite effective. Also, the number of consumers approaching the Consumer
Forums for the redressal of the grievances was found to be more than those approaching the
Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission.

Kar (1995) \(^61\) made a comparative analysis of the working of Delhi and Dhenkanal District
Forums, in which he found that the rate of disposal of the cases was tardy ad the backlog was on the
increase, particularly in Delhi. He suggested interalia wider participation of consumer associations in
the forums and imparting of consumer education by the government.

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\(^{60}\) Prakash Vir (1993): Regulation of Unfair Trade practices in India, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis,
Department of Commerce, Delhi University.
Dhenkanal District Consumer Dispute Redrssal Forums, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Department of
Commerce, Delhi University.
Sobti (1999)\textsuperscript{62} in her study on Patients Perception and the Legal Regulation of Medical services under The Consumer Protection Act made an extensive survey of 540 patients, 60 doctors from government and private hospitals and 50 experts with varied areas of interest. The study revealed that there was a substantial increase in number of complaints received and appeals filed in respect of deficiencies in medical services after the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in the case of Indian Medical Association Vs.V.P. Santha, delivered in 1995. It was also found that justice lies in the hands of the National Commission and various State Commissions and that the awareness and confidence of patients in the grievance redressal system under The Consumer Protection Act 1986 has increased.

Deepa Sharma (2002)\textsuperscript{63} in her study on Consumer Grievance Redressal under the consumer protection Act has evaluated the approach of the consumer courts on providing relief against the supply of defective goods, provision of deficient services, indulging in unfair trade practices, charging of prices in excess of the specified prices, and offering of hazardous goods for sale. In the findings it has been stated that though ninety days is the time limit for the disposal of cases in actual practice, maximum number of cases are disposed off in a longer period of time (i.e.) more than three years.

The above mentioned are the various interrelated studies conducted in the area of consumer protection. Based on the knowledge gained through the above mentioned studies, the researcher in her study makes an attempt to analyse the role of voluntary consumer organizations in protecting the consumers. The researcher further examines the awareness and involvement of the members of the voluntary consumer organizations and the non-members.


Raj Rani\textsuperscript{64} has reviewed the various legislative measures provided by the Central and State Governments and the efforts made by the manufacturers’ and traders’ associations as well as consumers’ organizations for safe-guarding the interests of the consumer movement.

David and Epstein\textsuperscript{65} in their study has discussed the various major issues relating to consumer law in England and has analyzed the policies and rules governing consumer transactions.

M. Julius Prasad, (2008)\textsuperscript{66} in their research study have found out that find out the awareness of the meaning of each right discloses that in urban area, more than 50 percent of the respondents are aware of the correct meaning of all the six consumer rights, but more than 63 percent of the respondents are aware of the consumers’ right to safety, the right to be informed and right to choose. The percentage of awareness about the meaning of the right to consumer education is comparatively less, that is, 52 percent. In rural area, more than 33 percent of the respondents are aware of the correct meaning of each of the consumer rights which is rather unsatisfactory. More than 58 percent of consumers have known only the right to be informed. The meaning of the right to redressal and the right to consumer education is known correctly by only less than 39 percent of the respondents. On the whole, the percentage of awareness is higher in urban area than in rural area. An analysis of the association between the consumers’ awareness about their rights and demographic factors is made for both in urban and rural consumers on the basis of certain hypotheses.

Sherry. L, Wang. YD, Donohue. G, (2007)\textsuperscript{67} they observed that The raison d’etre for the national air transportation system (ATS) is the movement of passengers and cargo. Thus, passenger trip time performance is positively correlated with passenger satisfaction, airfare elasticity, and airline

profits. Regulatory consumer information available to airline passengers provides measures of trip performance by using the percentage of on-time flights or on-time percentage (OTP) (e.g., 15-OTP metric). Researchers have shown that these flight-based metrics are poor proxies for passenger trip time performance. First, these metrics do not include the trip delays accrued by passengers rebooked because of canceled flights (which account for 40% of the overall passenger trip delays). Second, the metrics do not quantify the magnitude of the delay (only the likelihood) and thus fail to provide the consumer with a useful assessment of the impact of a delay (such as missed connections on next mode of transportation). A new consumer protection metric, expected value of passenger trip delay (EV-PTD), is described; it accounts for (a) canceled flights and (b) both the probability of delay and the magnitude of the delay. The EV-PTD for all 1,030 routes between 35 Operational Evolution Plan airports in 2005 ranged from 11.5 min (best) to 155 min (worst). The average route EV-PTD was 35 min. By treating passenger trip delay as a random variable it can be shown that the transportation process is not a fair game and that passengers and service providers (e.g., airlines, air traffic control, airports) cannot beat the system until the variance is significantly reduced. The implications of these results and the use of the EV-PTD metric by consumers for purchasing tickets and for consumer protection are discussed.

Sitnikov, CS & Bocean, CG, (2010)\textsuperscript{68} Observed that this paper grew out of the central issue addressed in Trading Up: Consumer and Environmental Regulation in a Global Economy by David Vogel, namely the impact of economic globalization on consumers’ protection regulations. Reviewing the extensive matter of consumer protection, with a thorough analysis of European Union last issued data, the paper summarizes and analyzes the contributions of ISO quality management standards to consumers’ protection based on a chain of logically connected concepts and activities. The approach was double-sided, intercrossing the qualitative and quantitative arguments joined with the analysis of the correlation between the efforts and effects in consumers’ protection area. Due to a yet continue

divergence regarding the regulatory processes, of a visible movement to the development and implementation of more stringent standards as well as a new means for implementing integrated quality management systems, the paper suggests and develops an implementation model of integrated quality management systems, based on Jorgensen 2006 model and improved through adding the new ISO 26000 standard.

Toma. SG, Stanciu. C, Irimia. E,(2010) they said that during the past centuries, consumption has become both one of the most discussed and analyzed subjects in the literature and a mass phenomenon in society. In order to satisfy their needs and to improve the quality of their life consumers need information and education. Consumers' information and education are promoted by a globally-developed consumer movement. The aims of our paper are to present the role of the consumer information and education in society, and to analyze and highlight the results of a national project regarding the information and education of Romanian young consumers, run by the Association for Consumers Protection (APC) Romania. By using primary data obtained from a survey based on a questionnaire, a set of three hypotheses was tested during our research. The results of our research shows that a relatively small number of Romanian pupils from the 5th grade to 8th grade were aware of the negative effects of unhealthy food consumption and of the fact that the unhealthy food consumption may give rise to obesity and ADHD (agitation with attention deficit).

S.Revathi (2007), in her research to suggest that 1. Consumer awareness should be created in rural areas through Mass Media. 2. Consumer associations should be established in rural areas, 3. Consumer Co-operatives should be established in rural areas, 4. Giving more power to consumer redressal forum will help to solve consumer problems, 5. Strict supervision should be exercised over

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prices, 6. Malpractices should be prevented at the maximum extent possible, 7. Essential commodities should be supplied to consumers through fair price shops.

S. Kareemulla Basha & Zahid Hussain (2006)\textsuperscript{71}, they observed in their study marketing mechanism is a major determining factor in consumerism. Marketing mechanism is targeting the two important groups of the society that is children and women. Children consume not only food and formulations but also attribute ideas in the name of fantasy without knowing where to draw the line. Women are used as brand promoting ambassadors for all the products around us. It is agreed in all fronts that “Consumer empowerment” in India has a long way to go. This is a right time to act. Let us prepare for next millennium and usher a new era of “Consumerism” in a global economy, when we are in the winter, spring cannot be far behind.

Nefat, A & Pamic, K(2008)\textsuperscript{72} describes Consumerism appeared as a response to the imbalance of powers between the manufacturers and the consumers and bad marketing practices of some companies. Consumerism has its own course of development anti is influenced by the changes in both the consumers and the whole environment. Food is the product that is of vital importance Jar every consumer. It keeps becoming more attractive with the development of science and technology but it does not necessarily; become healthier, and this especially refers to GM-food In order to trigger significant change, an appropriate attitude of the manufacturers towards consumer’s rights and interests shall be required. The research of the attitudes in the Croatian food industry indicates a very positive perception by its managers on the issues of consumerism as one of the conditions for mutually satisfactory and useful relationships of exchange.


Mierzwinski, E (2010)\textsuperscript{73} find the consumer advocacy movement has achieved many successes in the past one hundred years or more but still faces pushback from powerful special interests, including preemption of state authority, and contractual limits, such as arbitration, restricting private enforcement. Further, since laws have not kept up with changes in the financial marketplace, new financial transaction protections are needed. This commentary proposes new approaches for improving consumer protection and giving new tools to consumer advocates, both on and off the Internet, and examines the battle to enact a Consumer Financial Protection Agency.

McLeod, A (2008)\textsuperscript{74} describes The Australian Consumers' Association (ACA) was formed in 1959 in response to increasing market competition, falling product standards and mass manipulation by marketers. Despite being the first, largest and most influential consumer organization in Australia, the Association and the origin of the Australian consumer movement have been little studied. From its inception, the ACA acted as mass production's quality controller, directing its fire against the mass marketing methods that obscured rational consumer choice. But rather than rejecting the dual principles of mass production and mass consumption, the ACA sought to reform the system by equipping rational, informed consumers with independent, scientific information about products.

Mazurek, Malgozata Hilton & Matthew (2007)\textsuperscript{75}, they found that it has long been assumed that inattention to matters of consumption contributed to the collapse of the centrally planned economies of the Soviet bloc. In Poland, the party-state followed a productivity model which occasionally paid lip-service to the consumer but which ultimately focused on the dictates of production. Yet, by 1981, there existed an organized consumer movement (Federacja Konsumentow) which emerged amidst the broader challenges to the state associated with Solidarity. In the transition

\textsuperscript{74} McLeod, A(2008), Quality control: The origins of the Australian Consumers' Association, Business History,VL.50,P.No.79-98,2008.
to democracy, a form of consumer agency developed in Poland concerned less with the relative benefits of capitalism or communism in supplying consumer wants and desires, and more with a less overtly ideological notion of rights and protection promoted at the global level. This article demonstrates that Polish consumers and their expert representatives, both within and beyond the state, were capable of exercising an agency more complex than the negative one of frustration and recourse to alternative forms of provisioning usually associated with a command economy.

Holtfreter K. Van Slyke S. Blomberg . TG. (2005), they observed that advances in technology have transformed fraud against consumers from face-to-face, victim-offender interactions to a crime that now transcends international boundaries. Although consumer protection issues have been of interest to investigative journalists and literary scholars for centuries, the topic has only recently been subject to serious criminological inquiry. Employing the American consumer protection movement as an historical framework, we examine the evolution of consumer fraud. Our review documents that progressive social and legal changes in consumer protection and corporate regulation, as well as developments in criminological research, correspond to prominent literary exposes of the time. In today's technological age, such a reactive response to consumer fraud is neither efficient nor effective. Contemporary criminologists need to simultaneously address the questions of 'how' fraud is perpetrated and 'why' it occurs. Toward this end, we identify methodological strategies and data sources to promote empirical and theoretical understanding of consumer fraud, and to ultimately contribute to multi-national crime control policy.

Hilton, M (2007) stated that this article explores the impact of consumer activism upon understandings of social activism more generally. Consumer organizing, especially in the form associated with comparative testing magazines in western Europe and North America, has been largely overlooked, yet in the period from the 1960s it has constituted a global movement, influenced

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in particular by developing world consumer groups. This article offers a case-study of the Malaysian consumer movement and its impact upon transnational consumer politics in order to explore more generally the meaning of consumer politics and consumer society. It argues that for all the problems and contradictions within the notion of consumerism as a social movement, its existence nevertheless expands the concepts of activism and protest which have so far dominated the concerns of the contemporary historian. Consumer protest has taken a non-ideological and pragmatic approach which explodes distinctions between Right and Left, radical and reformist. This is perhaps typical of the experience of so many other nongovernmental organizations operating over the last few decades, a fact of which social historians ought to be aware if they are to understand better the dynamics and diversity of socio-political action after 1968.

Dr. V.R. Palanivel & N. Chandrasekar (2011), they found in their study is the important contributions of the media, journalists and the media have a good job of outlining the main issues of social concern made. The press in India has always been sensitive to the performance of their duties so that they participate in the question of politics can not do justice to their roles. The various laws, administrative measures and the massive participation of society, also have separate interests, thanks to the initiative and the role of the media. This is a problem of national integration, social cohesion and economic injustice, the elevation of the oppressed or educational advancement and economic development. Multiplicities of the media have brought a radical change in the psychology of people. People have become more attentive, competent and careful different views of the experience may have the same problem to understand because they perceive and analyze a situation.

Dr. U. Vani & A. Vaideke (2011) pointed out the consumers unfortunately cheating by way of overcharging, black marketing, misleading advertisements, etc has become the common practice of greedy sellers and manufacturers to make unreasonable profits. Invariably, consumers are a

78 Dr. V.R. Palanivel & N. Chandrasekar (2011), Role of media in consumer protection, National Seminar abstract, Bharathiar University. P.No.5.
vulnerable lot for exploitation, more so in a developing country with the prevalence of mass poverty and illiteracy. Consumer awareness through consumer education and actions by the Government, consumer activists, and associations are needed the most to make consumer protection movement a success in the country.

Cohen, L. (2010)\textsuperscript{80} express the first year of Barack Obama’s presidency has returned consumer issues to center stage, with several contentious struggles over consumer protection. This moment can be viewed as a fourth wave of the twentieth-century consumer movement, and a comparison with the first three waves (during the Progressive Era, the New Deal, and the 1960s-1970s) offers instructive insights. In particular, the contemporary battle over the Consumer Financial Protection Agency bears striking similarities to the failed campaign for a Consumer Protection Agency in the 1970s.

Barda, C & Sardianou, E (2010)\textsuperscript{81} stated that the purpose of this paper was to compose the profile of active consumers in Greece during a period of rising prices taking into account shifts in their consumption. A survey was conducted from 1 September 2008 to 21 November 2008 to collect the primary data source for the study. Questionnaires were administered to 200 consumers. To our knowledge this was the first attempt to offer insight into the characteristics of the Greek consumer in a period of economic crisis. For this purpose, econometric analysis was employed. Empirical results suggested that high-income groups spend more for food commodities and are less likely to be active consumers. It was concluded that consumers have reduced spending for some basic and semi-luxury products like fruits, meat, alcohol, sweets and coffee, and entertainment activities. The main factor which affected the reaction to price increases, as expected, was the monthly private income. Twenty


\textsuperscript{81} Barda, C & Sardianou, E, Analysing consumers’ ‘activism’ in response to rising prices, International Journal of Consumer Studies, V.34,P.no.133-139, March,2010
per cent of the consumers are members of a national consumer movement organization, and support their actions against rising prices. Women, who research the market before purchasing a product, are more likely than men to participate in economic boycotts. By examining the profile of non-active consumers and the reasons for their behaviour, we are able to propose a policy for the activation of the Greek consumer movement, which is necessary for the consumers' resistance to rising prices. Taking into consideration that Greek consumers face increased prices for food commodities and services, a policy framework to activate consumers is among the main prerequisites for maintaining consumers' well being. We suggest that the Greek Consumer Protection Institutes should regain consumers' confidence and focus on the dissemination of information about organized economic boycotts.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The present study has been restricted only to Dindigul town. The habitants of the town were selected as respondents for the study. The study was restricted only to the persons who have attained major at the age of 18 years. Thus the minors were beyond the scope of the study. Only six categories of the consumers are covered such as Teachers, businessman, Professionalists, House wives, Government employees and Students. The consumers in rural area are not covered in this study. The Public Distribution system functioning under Co-Operative Department is not covered under this study.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The term “awareness” refers to the state of ability to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, and objects. In this level of consciousness, some data can be confirmed by an observer without necessarily implying understanding. More broadly, it is the state or quality of being aware of something. Thus awareness of the respondents as consumers has been analysed in this study.
An attitude is nothing but a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of something.\(^2\) Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing, or event. This is often referred to as the attitude object. People can also be conflicted or ambivalent toward an object, meaning that they simultaneously possess both positive and negative attitudes towards the item in question. Thus the attitude of the respondents as consumers towards various protection measures in India has also been analysed in this study.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is the consumers’ awareness and attitude towards the consumer protection movement in Dindigul town. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To trace out the Origin and Growth of Consumer Movement in India.
- To Study the Legal Framework of various Consumer Protection Laws.
- To Analyse the Role of Consumers Dispute Redressal Agencies (CDRA) in India and in the study area.
- To Evaluate the Level of Consumer Awareness towards Consumer Protection Laws in Dindigul town.
- To Assess the Consumers’ Attitude towards Consumer Protection Laws.

1.7. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been framed for the purpose of the study.

- There is no significant relationship between the personal factors of the consumers such as Age, Sex, Education, Occupation, Income, Family size, Family type, Marital status, Community and their level of awareness before and after buying Goods and Services.

There is no significant relationship between the personal factors of the consumers such as Age, Sex, Education, Occupation, Income, Family size, Family type, Marital status, Community and Impact of the Act for their level of Awareness.

There is no significant relationship between the personal factors of the consumers such as Age, Sex, Education, Occupation, Income, Family size, Family type, Marital status, Community and their level of attitude towards the consumer protection Laws.

There is no significant relationship between the Impact of the Act for their level of Attitude.

There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of the consumers and their level of attitude towards the consumer movement.

1.8. Methodology

This study is based on both empirical and literature survey. The primary data for the study were collected from the consumers selected as sample from Dindigul town. To elicit information from the respondents, an interview schedule was prepared. The schedule was pre-tested and suitable modifications were carried out.

The Secondary data were collected from Consumers Associations, Consumer Court, newspapers and the annual reports and records of the Consumer Federations in Dindigul. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources were analysed with the help of Tabulation, Graphs and Diagrams.

1.9. Sampling Design

The researcher has adopted the sampling procedure for the research work. The study was conducted among the consumers who have attained major at the 18 years of age. The total population
of the study area as per 2001 Census is 1, 20,000 approximately (as per the Census list of Dindigul Municipality). The data were from the sample consumers selected by using the convenient stratified random sampling method. Totally 300 consumers were selected as sample consumers. The sampling design of the study is given in Table 1.1.

**TABLE 1.1**

**Sampling Design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Category of the Consumers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Businessmen</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Govt. Employees</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.10. Field work and Collection of Data

The field work of the study was conducted during August, 2010 to June, 2011. The method adopted for collecting the data was personal interview method. The researcher met the respondents in person and collected the information with the help of interview schedules. Then the filled up
schedules were thoroughly checked to ensure accuracy, consistency and competence. On an average, each interview took about 15 minutes.

1.11. Data Processing

After collection of data, the filled up interview schedules were edited properly. A master table was prepared to sum up all the information. With the help of the master table, the various table classifications were prepared and they were taken directly for analysis.

1.12. Framework of Analysis

The general plan of analysis ranges from simple percentage tables to advanced statistical tools. For the purpose of testing various hypotheses, Chi Square test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) have been used. The extent and variation of awareness and attitude towards the protection measures and impact of the Act on the respondents were measured through the Likert’s Five Point Scale.

The dependent variables awareness and impact of the Act were related to the independent factors influencing the same using Chi square test. Another dependent variable attitude of the respondents was related to the independent factors influencing the same using ANOVA.