“So, even we don’t get sufficient water...does any one?” Who is responsible for supplying water to us—the Indian people— the government or the private tankerwallahs? How much are we supposed to get? Who decides this? Do we have a right to our share of water?
INTRODUCTION

Emphasizing the consumer movement former vice president of India Hidayatullah (1984) expressed:

"Why have milk price gone up so much? In olden days the mother milked the cows, the daughter set it out in pans to separate the cream, one of the sons sold it in the market. But today the agricultural department is mobilized, the cow sheds are immunized, the milk is homogenized, the supplies are motorized, the dairies are organized, the milkman are subsidised, the political leaders are energized and the result is Indian consumers are victimized". (Reader Digest, November 1984)

The story of consumption and consumerism starts from the day one today as soon as women conceive the baby varieties of supplement are been prescribed for the development and embryo becomes consumer. This process of consumption ends with life. Hence it can be said that ...

"Consumption and consumerism is a continuous process from cradle to grave"

The ages have been passed till now when society was self-dependent because the weavers wove clothes, the blacksmiths supplied iron/steel goods and washerman washed the clothes, there were different artisans for different tasks. The city village or society had small-scale production scanty resources and limited consumers. The life was simple and interdependent with less cheating. But due to so-called progress in industrialization the average condition have tremendously been changed from one side of a coin to the other side. The wants are unlimited and prices are not constant. Products are not reliable; the market is overflowing with similar kinds of products. Consumers are indirectly and psychologically forced to go for conspicuous purchase. Therefore, the consumer must be wise buyer and directly in contact with the utilities and uses of the product so that they can get a clear cut opinion about the commodity they want to buy and make an intelligent difference for the malpractice in the market frauds, burglary, inadequate qualities and inferior quantities of any particular product or consumable item.

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These points cannot be adopted in habit instantly in this random environment and thus it surely needs a better buying practice. Since children are becoming young consumers at an early age, children must learn to obtain information about goods and services, understand the psychology of selling and advertising, learn to shop wisely and distinguish between wants and needs.

Children are spending more of their leisure time watching television at the cost of other pursuit such as reading or sports. With the introduction of a number of specialized satellite channels televisions enjoy a large viewership base consisting of children. Exposure to the market place as young shoppers has made most children aware of the different kinds of products that are available. Advertisements are no doubt an important source of information as they help to inform consumers about the availability of different products before making their choice. A majority of the advertisements are aimed at young children today, especially those covering food products, beverages and cosmetics (such as toothpaste / fairness creams). So the food preferences and habits of children are being affected to a large extent by advertising.

Unfortunately, many advertisements make false promises, are highly exaggerated and give incomplete descriptions of products. The media, schools and parents along with consumer groups need to help children develop the ability to understand the purpose of advertising.

The consumer patterns are changing fast and children today are very clear on their choice regarding food, clothing, cosmetics or accessories. Parents are increasingly permitting their children to take decision when shopping.

Deborah (1999) strategies recognize the dynamics of parent-child influences and effect of advertising on children. Parents are more likely to be influenced by children for a wide range of products. According to him children are playing a more important part in family decision for purchase in both, traditional and non-traditional family. According to today's trend, the husband and wife both are working. The situation of absence of parents in household expedites self-reliance among children often requiring them to Shoppe. In non-traditional families, the rapid increase of single parent household has also increased the number of children involved in shopping. In some cases double
earning provides children with ample amount of pocket money and freedom for shopping. As a result, children are likely to influence decisions for product that whole family consumes. A study discussed by Deborah (1999) estimated that children influence $132 billion in family expenditure over 62 product categories. The bulk of this influence is in food and beverage products.

The researches on younger children have focused on how children learn about purchasing and consumption task and the parent child interaction in the purchasing process. Researches on adolescent have been directed toward the relative influence of parent and peer groups in teen-age purchasing decisions. This focus was due to general belief that children rely more on parents for norms and values when they are younger; they rely more on their peer group as they grow older. This is considered as “the consumer socialization of children”. Consumer socialization is the process by which “young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitude relevant to their functioning in the market place.” Deborah (1999)

Children watch and imitate parental behavior because parents serve as role models. Children are also socialized through direct experiences. As a result, the process of consumer socialization is occurring much earlier and much faster than it used to be.

1.1. Stages in Consumer Socialization:

Mc Neal (1993) who studied the processes of children socialization over many years and developed a five-stage process:

1. Observing (Six month): In this stage children construct mental images of market place, object and symbols. They begin to understand that stores are source of good things.

2. Making requests (Two years): Children begin to make requests for desired objects at home, particularly as TV advertising becomes a meaningful stimulus. Half of children’s first request in stores is for ready to eat cereals. Another thirty percent are for snacks items.
3. **Making selections (Three and half year):** Children begin to develop memory of store locations for certain products and retrieve satisfying products by themselves.

4. **Making assisted purchases (Five and half years):** Children are asking and receiving permissions to obtain the object in the store. The child has the ability to spend his money.

5. **Making independent purchases (Eight year onwards):** Children buy on their own without parental assistance. They gain a better understanding of money and become mature enough to convince parents. They can make responsible purchases on their own. So it can be said that in the fifth stage children are able to think abstractly and can associate concepts. Ideas are more fully developed and they influence parental purchases.

It, then, becomes very important for children to be taught to Shoppe wisely and a few simple precautions will ensure that they choose the right product at the right price.

Realizing this need, schools must incorporate consumer education into school curricula, as it is important to impart practical skills and critical ability needed to cope with social and economic changes.

1.2. **Definition of Consumer Education:**

There are many definitions of consumer education available. Below given definitions conveys appropriate meaning:

1. "It is a process that equips people to function as responsible consumers in a complex technological society- it helps them understand their value system: develop sound decision making procedure in the market place recognize their rights and responsibility" (*Western Provincial Task force Reports, 1976.*)
2. Consumer education is the process by which consumers...

"Develop skills to make informed decision in the purchase of goods and services in the light of personal value, maximum utilization of resources, available alternatives, ecological consideration and changing economic condition".

"Become knowledgeable about the law, their rights and methods of using resource, in order to participate effectively and self confidently in the market place and take appropriate action to seek consumer redress. "Develop an understanding of the citizen’s role in economic, social government system and how to influence those systems to make them responsive to consumer need."[U.S. Department of education, 1980.]

1.3. Consumer Education: A Catalyst for Action:

In the final analysis consumer education must motivate consumers to participate proactively in the decision making process, especially, those that affect their day-to-day lives. Consumer education must awaken the consumer eye "inculcate the responsibilities of consumers; ensure constant vigilance of consumer rights and a shared value system. It is believed that meditations opens the "third eye" likewise, consumer education should help to open the "consumer eye" of consumers.

The consumer eye concept means that informed consumers looked at a product. Critically and analytically first from his own point of view as an individual consumer, than with the interest of the community at large at mind- the consumer who has his” consumer eye” opened, analyses products on several basis like health, economics, product safety, legal and environmental considerations, and social costs.

Consumers are increasingly exposed to a myriad of diverse influences beyond their national borders because the advances communication technology are shrinking distances and forgetting links between markets world-wide. Consumer behaviors are changing day by day with the drastic changes within
the political borders and in the spatial configuration of the sales markets for consumer goods, which are connected with strong sociological cultural forces.

There are different changing dynamics of consumer behavior in the world few are introduced here. The first changing dynamics is massive waves of migration which is taking place, as consumer from emerging market are moving to industrialized economies. The second one is that consumers are becoming more mobile and traveling more both for leisure and business. One of the results of this changing dynamics is that the consumers are becoming exposed to the product lifestyles and behavior patterns of consumers in other countries firms gradually alter traditional patterns of behavior, by introducing new products, services and ideas into global market place.

In good old age things were so simpler and consumer did not face much problems. Today the market place is huge but shrinking as well as in terms of faster reach and proliferation of organized business. Expressed the noted diplomat and economist, Gailbraith, (2001) "It is not consumer who is the king, but it is the large corporation who is the king in the economy." Whatever happens is not because the consumer wants in that way, but simply because powerfully large corporation prefer it that way. Realizing these needs, there is a great requirement of consumer research and consumer education for consumer welfare.

1.4. Role of Educational Technology in Effectiveness of Teaching:

Teaching technology involves the mechanism of instructional process in the classroom situation. It has three components 1) Method 2) Material 3) Media.

In the traditional approach to school teaching, most class time was spent with the teachers lecturing and the students watching and listening. The students work individually on assignments, and cooperation is discouraged. Such teacher-centered instructional methods have repeatedly been found inferior compared to instruction that involves active learning, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class that is cooperative learning, in which students work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability. This applies understanding of
content, acquisition of critical thinking or creative problem-solving skills, formation of positive attitudes toward the subject being taught, or level of confidence in knowledge or skills.

Today it is believed that education must be based on the principle that humans are social animals who learn best in real-life activities with other people. Given this view of human nature, the most progressive teacher desires to provide not just reading and drill, but also real-world experiences and activities that center on the real life of the students. A typical progressive slogan is "Learn by Doing!"

I forget what I hear, I remember most what I see and I learn the most what I Do. To make hearing permanent and effective, plain talking and lecturing is not enough, it has to be accompanied by practical experience and exposure. The educator must provide opportunity. Actual involvement by learner so that they can see, practice, gain confidence, ask question and apply to real life situation.

Keeping this philosophy in mind development and testing the efficiency of educational media for imparting consumer education was planned to equip the children with critical awareness regarding consumerism, and in a participatory process attempt to discover ways of strengthening their response towards the media. The basic idea of the development of intervention program is to give “education through entertainment” all the event invited fully or partially participation of the students and stimulate their thinking.

1.5. Significance of the Present Study:

Today children are an important target group for advertising because they are influential to the buying decision of their parents and also have own pocket money at their disposal.

Producer interest and consumer interest do not always coincide. For the most part there is an imbalance between the power of suppliers on the one hand and consumers on the other. Consumer Education can help maintain the balance. All areas of life are being commercialized. The influences of marketing and advertising on a persons’ life are beginning sooner and more cunningly. Suppliers’ strategies are already present at kindergarten and pre-school, and consumer organizations, as well as parents and pre-school teachers, complain about a mixing of editorial and advertising parts, especially during TV programmes for children. The promotional activities of the suppliers are, in the
first place, aimed at gaining profit and in this they can be considered as consumer opponents.

However, this does not mean that the goals of producers and consumers can not coincide at all. On the contrary, many traders and producers know they won’t remain in business very long if they don’t listen to the needs and wishes of consumers.

Yet, the imbalance is still there. Producers are much better informed and organized than consumers. Today, advertising employs an army of highly educated people and millions of dollars are spent on getting the message across. In a book “Marketing and Consumer Education” published by the German Consumer Institute (Hellman, 1993) this crucial problem has been studied in the form of a question whether David, the consumer educator, can hope to fight Goliath, the mega-marketer.

This problem has also been studied by the Consumers Union Education Service (1990) in the United States. They have investigated the commercial pressures on children and have concluded with the following summary: Promotional campaigns and commercial messages permeate most waking hours of our children’s lives. Many messages are hidden, appearing to be a school lesson, a kid’s club, an entertaining movie, a magazine game or a puzzle. Advertisements are attuned to kids’ development stages – to their need for peer approval, status, independence. The overwhelming message is that things make the person; that what’s important is what you have, not who you are. These pressures influence children’s development as citizens, as well as consumers. The barrage of advertising encourages continuous consumption and acquisition at the expense of reasoned decision-making, thrift, and environmental sensitivity. At the time when kids need to learn how to consume thoughtfully, numerous promotional messages are teaching the opposite.

If some people think Consumer Education has an attitude to be anti-advertising or anti-business, this is a superficial view and not correct. Consumer Education is more a matter of teaching analytical skills and awakening “consumer awareness”, so that students can identify different marketing methods in order to avoid being unconsciously influenced. The end-result should hopefully be students/consumers who make informed choices in the marketplace and appreciate the role of consumers in the economy and in society at large.
Consumer education teach a value system which goes beyond purchasing skills, wise use of money and possessions and effective complainers to encompass a countervailing notion of sustainable consumption. It includes care for the environments, duties and obligations as well as rights, concern for the disadvantaged, and awareness of the finite resources of the economy.

As learning is a cumulative the acquisition of attitudes, skills are knowledge occur by building as a set of guideline for consumer protection. The guidelines address upon what one has previously understood.

The international organization of consumer unions, IOCU (1999) knows the needs and interests of consumer and has outlined the following eight rights for consumer protection.

1. Right to basic needs. 6. Right to redress.
2. Right to safety. 7. Right to presentation.
4. Right to information.
5. Right to consumer education.

Consumer education will also inculcate the responsibilities of consumer because of consumers wants their rights recognized; they must first exercise their responsibilities. IOCU has articulated five basic responsibilities of consumers. They are

1. Critical awareness: To be more alert and questioning about the price and qualities of goods and services.
2. Action: The responsibilities to assert you and act to ensure that we get a fare deal.
3. Social concern: To be aware of the impact of our consumption on other citizens.
4. **Environmental awareness**: To understand the environmental consequences of our consumption to conserve natural resources and product earths.

5. **Solidarity**: To organize together as consumers to develop the strength and influence to promote product of our interest.

The study assumes all pervasiveness since every child in the society is a consumer of tomorrow. The study seeks to enlighten the rights and responsibilities of consumers against the notorious and various unfair trade practices indulged in by producers and middlemen. It also teaches wise use of money and possession and effective complaining to encompass a countervailing nation of sustainable consumption. It teaches a value system which goes beyond purchasing skills. The study will be innovative instructional strategy for imparting consumer education to the students, which will motivate the students to take more interest in learning. Hence it is significant.

The study will be helpful in participation of the students at the consumer education programme that will help them to practice looking at their own experiences and comparing them to relevant consumer issues, such as:

- How do my experiences create a certain life style?
- Does my consumption cover basic needs?
- What consequence do my consumptions have for nature and other people?

It will also help student to identify specific ways of posing a problem. A few examples of relevant ways of posing questions that students should learn to identify are:

- How does advertising influence me as a consumer?
- Is the product hazardous or safe to our health?
- Has anyone been exposed to any unfair treatment in the making of the product?
CHAPTER ONE

Everyday life in post-modern society is complex. This study will help students to develop competence required to deal with it. To develop insight into the dynamics of the consumer society, the following is essential:

- Knowledge of economic principles and processes.
- Knowledge of laws and agreements made to protect the consumers.
- Knowledge of Public councils, consumer organization and committees.

The planned study will also help the teachers to develop the positive attitude on consumer education and to possess good consumer awareness among children.

1.6. Research Aim

The objectives of the study are set as follows:

General objective

To enhance the level of awareness regarding consumerism among secondary school students through intervention program

Specific objectives

I. To study the awareness level amongst school going students regarding consumerism.

II. To develop an intervention program for enchantment of level of awareness regarding consumerism among the selected secondary school students.

III. To develop participatory, semi-participatory and non-participatory educational media for imparting consumer education to the selected students.

IV. To study the effectiveness of the developed educational media for imparting consumer education to the selected students.

V. To study the effectiveness of intervention program on enhancement of awareness level regarding consumerism among the secondary school students.