CHAPTER 8
SYNTHESIS AND SUGGESTIONS

SYNOPSIS

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8.1 **Introduction**

In this chapter conclusions are drawn from the entire study and suggestions are also highlighted. These suggestions are for various publics who can contribute effectively in making the consumer movement successful in this country. The suggestions are based on this study, observations and experiences, and literature survey.

The chapter ends with concluding remarks and guidelines for future research which will help the researchers, to study consumerism and it will broader the boundaries of the subject.

8.2 **Suggestions for consumers**

Role of consumers in consumer protection:

(i) ‘Charity begins at home’ – According to this saying the consumers both individually and collectively must help themselves first. Consumer himself can do a lot for himself well as his community.
Since everyone is a consumer, consumers should take an oath that they will not exploit others. Then the problem of consumer exploitation will not arise at all. Moreover the consumers must have their own code of ethics which must specify that they will not buy goods at black market price or will not avail goods or services or benefits by giving unreasonably high price or extra money which will encourage corruption.

(ii) Consumer has limited income and unlimited wants, But to satisfy their unlimited wants, one should set his priorities rationally and smartly and buy priority goods of the best quality at a reasonable price.

(iii) The consumers should not be led away by psychologically, emotionally appealing advertisements and other sales promotion campaigns, gift schemes, contests, lucky draws but should pay attention to the product quality features.

(iv) As far as possible, consumers should buy goods having quality marks such as ISI, Agmark, FPO etc...
(v) Consumers’ must keep provision for future responsibilities like education of children, their marriage, sickness and liquidity for present financial commitments and thereafter the remaining part of their regular income may be utilised for necessities, comforts and luxuries.

(vi) In order to protect their interest, consumers’ must obtain an authorised bill for the goods and services.

(vii) While buying the goods, the consumers should carefully read the matters on the label especially the product contents, manufacturing and expiry date and must know the terms of guarantee and warranty as the case may be.

(viii) Consumers’ must participate actively in the activities and programme like get-together, meetings, seminars, exhibitions, demonstrations and processions, dharanas, picketing, boycotting, and other consumer education programme arranged by consumer organisations from time to time.

(ix) In addition to consumers certain individuals having their specialised skills and knowledge can also contribute to a great extent in popularising consumer protection concept.
These individuals such as technically and professionally qualified persons, advocates, academicians, journalists, social workers, political leaders, and policy makers, etc. can act as opinion leaders, motivators, social reform agents and educators for growth of consumerism in the country, hence their services should be taken in handling various problems of consumers.

8.3 Suggestions for Consumer Interest Groups

(i) It has been observed that all consumer organisations in Gujarat are trying their best for substantial contribution to develop consumer movement but all the organisations have their own concept and the style of working in the field of consumerism. If these organisations join hands, work collectively by setting down priorities scientifically and attack on vital issues of priority, affecting the masses, especially people residing in rural, backward, tribal areas and for the poorest of the poor in the mission of consumer protection and consumer welfare.
(ii) It is also noticed that in backward and rural areas there are very few consumer organisations. More consumer organisations should be established in these areas.

(iii) Consumer interest groups should frequently interact with each other for exchange of views, knowledge, experiences and expertise which will help in strengthening the consumer movement. The close liaison between consumer organisations and federations at taluka, district, state, national and international levels will facilitate representations of consumer problems at proper level with appropriate authorities.

(iv) Continuous training in various areas of consumer protection to volunteers active workers and office bearers of consumer interest groups.

(v) Rational and smart consumer buying decisions are based on availability of information and expert guidance. Hence consumer information System (C.I.S.) should be evolved which should be supported by consumer education, guidance, counseling by the consumer interest groups.
(vi) Consumer organisations must be managed in a professional manner to make their efforts more effective and purposeful.

(vii) Information to consumer alone will not be sufficient but it should be supported by consumer education and awareness campaign. Such a campaign is inevitable to safeguard their interests against scientifically designed, psychologically and emotionally exploiting dynamic and aggressive multimillion advertising campaigns.

(viii) The study of consumer interest groups have identified that there is lack of consumer participation in their activities. To encourage their participation periodical get-together and activities of interest of all age groups should be arranged, consumer shopping clubs should be established. Consumers who have specialised in certain fields may be invited to give their honorary services. Youths, retired persons and women may be motivated to participate.

(ix) According to consumer organisations, getting finance for wide ranging activities is one of the major problems faced by the consumer interest groups. In addition to the governments', financial encouragement they can raise financial resources by
membership subscription, donations, charity shows, grants from foreign government and other international agencies. Consumer organisations can also undertake economic activities like cottage industries, super markets etc. for fund raising as well as for consumer benefits. Priced publications and profitable distribution of booklets, journals, research works on matters of consumer interest can prove to be a major source of income which will also simultaneously give momentum to the growth of consumerism.

8.4 Suggestion for other Voluntary organisations and Employees' associations:

There are hundreds of voluntary organisations in the country rendering yeoman’s services to the people in different fields of humanity. These organisations can also simultaneously educate their target groups in the fields of consumer awareness, protection and welfare. If necessary, they can organise activities in collaboration with experienced consumer organisations. There are several employees association having large membership while protecting the interest of their members, these
associations may also propagate consumer education activities among their members.

8.5 Suggestions for Trade and Industries.

With the emergence of liberal and global Indian economy and in the industrially advanced state of Gujarat, it would be most timely to consider the following suggestions in consumer interest as well as for the future growth of trade and industries:

(i) The products and services should be so designed that they would satisfy the consumers by practicing marketing and societal marketing concepts, which means that the product must possess features like its design, utility, durability, quality, safety, standards, aesthetic values, convenience, comforts, taste, economy, easy operations, effectiveness, etc. and should be free from hazardous and negative effects and at the same time have a reasonable price.

(ii) Consumer oriented policies and planning should not only be implemented as a social responsibility but should be considered as a business policy which will help in winning over the consumers and to fight competition. It is said that the most successful companies of the world are very close to consumers.
(iii) The product should meet not only the standards prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (B.I.S.) but should also possess the standards laid down by International Standards Organisation (ISO).

Better quality of product has more durability and hence the national resources also will not be wasted

(iv) Trade and industries should mention voluntarily expiry date and other useful information in a legible manner on the packaged goods and other non durable consumer goods, even if it is not a legal requirement.

(v) It has been observed in case of certain non-durable consumer goods that their contains and packages are deceptive. This misguides and consumers about the quantity available.

(vi) The printed matter on the package must be easily legible because in case of some products, the information though printed is not easily readable hence the very purpose of its legal requirement is not served.

(vii) The trade and industries association should see that the code of conduct designed by them are practiced in its true sense.
In order to maintain close liaison with the consumers, consumer relations and grievance cell should be established at district on city levels. A proper machinery is required for the best satisfaction of the consumers. This will not only boost up the market but will also provide useful consumer reactions.

Efforts should be made continuously to control the cost so that the benefits of cost reduction and appropriate technology can be transferred to the consumers.

8.6 Suggestions for Government

(i) A strong consumer movement can act as powerful force of price control and social welfare. The Government can achieve it's mission in this directions through a planned 'Total consumer Protection programme;' and guide the Consumer Organsiations for the Planned Total Consumer Protections Programme may include the stage wise goals to be achieved in a time bound schedule which can be designed in a highly rational professional and purposeful manner.

(ii) The laws should be made more simple so that the common man can understand. The laws should be properly implemented and strictly enforced. The legal effectiveness can
increased only when its beneficiaries are made aware of their protection and welfare. The legal procedures should be made more simple and less time consuming because justice 'delayed is justice denied'. Research should be made in the various legislations protecting consumer interest.

(iii) Institutions giving the quality certification must have continuous by watchful eyes on the quality standards of such products.

(iv) More number of quality testing laboratories should be established for the benefits of consumers and consumer organisations.

(v) Consumer education can be made more effective by more extensive use of mass media, publications in regional languages, guidance to consumer organisations, through well designed programme, consumer rights, consumer economics, consumer education, consumer protection movement, consumer legislation and consumerism in India and abroad etc. should be taught at various levels starting from primary, high school, higher secondary, undergraduate, Post Graduate and also as specialised courses of study and research at appropriate levels of various branches of knowledge. Moreover
consumer education can also be made a part of social education and adult education programme to achieve rapid consumer awareness.

(vi) Present consumer Organisations should be encouraged with more guidance and financial aid and new consumer organisations should be motivated to come-up especially in rural areas.

8.7 Conclusion and scope of Future Research

Knowledge has no boundaries and research is a never ending process. Hence no research work appears complete. In this thesis we have treated various general aspects of consumer protection on a very broad canvas.

Here we have considered literature survey highlighting some important events and researches that are landmark in the field of consumerism on a global scale. Dealing with Indian Scenario, we have made efforts to go well deep and made an inquiry into the existence of consumer protection concept in ancient India and have inferred the consumer protection concept from various historical literature. The study of consumer protection in ancient India was followed by some
findings of consumer protection concept in mediaeval India and thereafter consumer protection in modern India is reviewed. A separate chapter is devoted to the study of present state of legal framework of consumer protection in India covering some important laws protecting consumer interest.

We have made a special study of evolution and growth of consumer protection in Gujarat followed by three surveys based on primary data of consumers, corporate houses and consumer organisations and have analysed and interpreted details which will be highly useful. Moreover, on the basis of the study of consumerism in India and Gujarat and analysis of primary data of the aforementioned three surveys, the consumer protection movement in Gujarat is evaluated by us in general and also with reference to non-durable consumer goods.

From the above three surveys, useful details are available but similar studies can be conducted on consumers nation-wide level or for consumers of a particular population or economic class.
Similarly corporate attitudes and consumer organisations can also be studied on a nation wide scale. As our canvass of the study is already too large for such a kind of study. At the same time, it can not be denied that the studies conducted by us are based on primary data and hence the sources of information are more authentic and reliable to derive useful and dependable conclusions.

Consumerism can be still called at its initial stage in India hence less literature is available while more of such kind of work is required for the growth of consumerism. Moreover, more researches should be conducted and encouraged on the state of consumer awareness, consumer exploitation, legal framework, corporate and Government attitude, effectiveness of consumer organisations, environmental situations and circumstances etc.