CHAPTER - 2

CONSUMERISM IN INDIA
ISSUES AND PROBLEMS
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STATUS OF CONSUMERS TODAY IN INDIA CONTEXT

The consumer is the forgotten man of the modern Indian economy. He is the last organized and the most centrifugal element in the circle of investment, production, sale and consumption, and is generally taken for granted as one who has anyhow to buy in order to live.

Adulteration, variation in the contents of the pact, use of deceptive or fractional weights are all the ways and means by which the consumer is exploited to the maximum extent possible. Adulteration becomes more widespread when prices move up and scarcities set in. There seems to be an organized attempt to take the consumer for a ride by the business community. Though adulteration is a crime, it is an accepted practice among many businessmen, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. In this context, while reliable statistic are not available but it is fairly certain that the situation if anything is worse.

The exploitation of consumer is greater in the case of tariff protected economy which reduces the import of goods from abroad and gives a near-monopolistic advantages to goods produced within the country. The position goes from bad to worse in the case of protection that has long passed the stage of infancy. Sugar industry is a glaring example in India.

The absence of perfect competition makes the thing worse for the consumer. In the case of perfect competition, the very competition among producers and suppliers is a factor of safety in keeping prices down, eliminating the less efficient, and preserving quality. But perfect competition is a theoretical condition which does not exist in
real life. In actual practice, one or more units in an industry may achieve such dominant position that they are able to control the market by regulating prices or output or eliminating competition. Further, some producers and distributors, even though they do not enjoy such a dominant position, may adopt practices which restrain competition and thereby deprive the community of the beneficent effects of the rivalry between producers and producers, and distributors and distributors, to give the best service.

With the advancement of modern techniques in synthetics and chemical processing, and the persuasive powers of psychological advertising, even educated consumers can be lured into buying the unwanted and unnecessary goods to a large extent.

Consumers' criticism of the business community is often echoed in respect of factors like price, quality, advertising, packing, distribution, after-sales services, etc.

In fact, adulteration of goods, poor quality, failure to give fair measures, lack of service and courtesy to the consumer, misleading or dishonest advertising are all advertising are all examples of violation by a business enterprise of its obligations towards the consumer of its products.

**Business as responsible person**

There was a time when business played a very significant role in economic, social, political and technological affairs, but now it plays a very significant one. It has been recognized in recent years almost all over the world that business owes responsibilities to all segments of the society. These include - the shareholders, workers, suppliers, dealers, consumers, the local community and the state.

It is not too much to say that the wealth of a country is to a great extent controlled by business. This gives business and its executives the "enormous power" to affect the lives of employees, consumers, shareholders, etc.
Business is not a purely profit-making institution, it is an institution of a much wider implications – economic, social, political, etc. This is so as a business enterprise is not brought into existence for its own sake, but for the purpose of attaining some objective(s). How far a business is successful and effective in achieving its goal is dependent to very great extent of the environment in which it is placed. Business cannot function in a vacuum. Its environment has, more or less, a direct bearing on its success or otherwise. Business is a part of the total environment in which we live, being influenced by it, while being a force in influencing it. As presented in Fig.2.1 social, political, scientific and technological and economical systems make up the external environment which has a tremendous impact on the development and growth of business. The environment of business comprises several segments which may be classified as under:

i) Social – comprising consumers and employees as well as social institutions which benefit from the business or provide benefits to it;

ii) Economic – encompassing the whole economy, the various economic institutions including the competing business enterprises with which business has to deal;

iii) Political – covering the political institutions of the country including the government and the legislature which regulates business activity and draws upon the resources of the business in the form of taxes and donations; and

iv) Technological – comprising the know-how and production and management technology available to business at any point or period of time.

The relationship between business and its environment is one of mutual benefit and therefore, it has been shown as a two-way relationship in fig. 2.1. This may be referred to as a 'symbiotic'
relationship as business functions in such a way that it both takes from and gives nurture to the various segments of its environment. Only through such a relationship can a business survive and prosper. Otherwise it will starve and wither away.

Fig. 2.1 Interrelationship between Business and its External Environment.

The environment in which business is placed can also be described from another angle. There are various interest groups which contribute to the continuity and prosperity of business. These groups are also claimants of returns in different from business. These groups include consumers, employees, owners, creditors, suppliers distributors and dealers, competitors and the government. The survival and growth of business will depend upon its relations with all these interest groups. These interest groups (also known as ‘Publics’) can be wither internal or external. Fig. 2.2 shown business in relation to the different interest groups that constitute its environment.

2.4
Fig. 2.2 Business and its interest Groups

Business is influenced and shaped by its environment and also influences the segments which come into contact with it. In the later sense, business has also been an instrument of change. Therefore, it is necessary to explain social, economic and political implications of establishing and running a business.

Business as an Economic Entity.

One of the economic implications of business is that it collects huge sums of money from different sources including the members of the public. It business is successful, it continues to flourish and expand. It accumulates assets by laughing back profits. Business is also a big employer. To manage the huge capital, machines and materials of the business, people are to be employed in large numbers by business. The amount of tax paid by business is going up from year to year.

In addition to persons employed for managing the huge capital, machines, money and materials, business comes into contact with many more people who are related to it as suppliers, dealers and
consumers of its products and services. In addition to these, there will be owners, managers, shareholders, bankers brokers, underwriters, stock-exchanges etc.

Business as social Entity

A business enterprise is not just an economic entity. It is also a social and political entity. Social implications of business has now become a well-developed debate. What are these implications? The basic implication, of course, is the dependence of the society upon business for production and distribution of goods and services. Social obligations belong to every kind of business. No business, however small, is purely a private or personal affair. Every business has to operate within a certain kind of social and economic environment. Modern business has assumed, in addition to the primary obligations of production and distribution of goods and services, responsibilities of diverse kinds. They have established training research and educational institutions. They have erected hospitals, schools, and places of entertainment and worship. Thus, the modern business has assumed many social responsibilities in addition to its basic economic functions.

Relevance of Consumer satisfaction for Business

Business encompasses a number of activities. There was a time when manufacturing was at one end and retailing at the other. But now there are many activities of business before the manufacturing begins and after a product is sold. In fact, the essence of all business activity should be the same Consumer Protection and Satisfaction. The basic function of business is to identify as well as anticipate consumer demand; produce and distribute authentic goods and services of the right quantity and at the most reasonable possible
prices. In this way a double duty is cast on business: to produce quality goods at the lowest cost and to produce things which people recall need.

After all, goods are produced or services provided with the ultimate object of satisfying consumer wants. In a free, uncontrolled economy, it is the consume who determines what goods shall be produced; it is the consumer (both present and potential) who influences the price and determines where, when and how goods and services will marketed. The consumer not only determines income of business, but also directly affects its success and survival. Goodwill of the consumers is often a critical factor in the success of business. A corollary to consumer satisfaction is the need to protect him against monopoly, restrictive and unfair trade practices. Such protection cannot only be provided by legislation but by business if the latter learns to play its part of the game with fairness and liberalism. Consumer satisfaction and protection, thus, provide the rationale of business. The ultimate success of business depends on consumers' satisfaction.

The following quotation from Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the nation is very appropriate in this context:

i) A customer is the most important visitor on our premises.
ii) He is not dependent on us, we are dependent on him.
iii) He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it.
iv) He is not the outsider on our business. He is a part of it.
v) We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so.

These statements will be a surprise to many of us, at present, coming from Gandhiji many decades ago.
Why should business change its attitude?

Business firms need to change their attitude towards consumers. Some of the reasons are:

(i) There is a shift in the social and economic priorities of the people. Earlier, the emphasis was on improving the material standard of living, but now the consumers are more sensitive to social and environmental needs. The orientation is shifting from things to people.

(ii) India is entering a more advanced stage of cultural and economic development. Indians are willing to spend more money and put in more effort on environment and other social needs.

(iii) Discontent with the present attitude of business firms is very strong. Complaints involve violation of the consumers' right to be informed, to choose and to be heard.

(iv) There is a growing feeling that advertising is a manipulative tool, whereby sellers unfairly coax consumers into buying things which they really do not want.

(v) There is increasing competitiveness in every sphere of business.

Business has to change its attitude towards consumerism in order to survive in the competitive environment across the world. It has to imbibe a spirit of innovation and customer-orientation. This can be done through persons working in the organization. They are to be motivated to provide outstanding products to customers. The business leaders – the captains of industry cannot close their eyes to the growing realization that one cannot take the customer for granted.
Therefore, a business leader has to be aware of the changes in the business environment and orient his organization to the changing times to face the accompanying challenges.

No doubt, an organization has to concentrate on strategy of capacity utilization, cutting costs and prompt service. But it has to adopt a strategy of customer – satisfaction through quality improvement and maintaining delivery schedule. This is so, especially when to its imaginatively.

**Consumerism has come to stay**

The term ‘consumerism’ refers to the widening range of activities of government, business and independent organizations that are designed to protect individuals from policies that infringe upon their rights as consumers. Fig 2.3. The Consumer movement all over the world has come to stay. India is no exception. The reasons for the movement to evolve and get strength are many. Some of these are:

(i) Spread of education, especially higher education has made people aware of their rights as consumers.

(ii) Rising incomes have increased the purchasing power of the people to spend more.

(iii) The rise in prices of products has created, in consumers, an attitude to except better quality. If they do not get goods worth their money, consumer are frustrated.

(iv) Inflation in recent times has made purchasers think about the quality, quantity and variety of products before buying.

(v) There is a large variety of products which has increased product complexity. This product complexity has been encouraged by new technology which in turn makes the consumers expect perfect products.

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Legislation leading to consumer protection has created an awareness among consumers about their rights and remedies available to them.

**Fig 2.3 What is consumerism?**

The need for consumers' protection and satisfaction have been widely accepted all over the world. The United States of America has been a pioneer in this respect. Britain has followed suit. Today there are consumer' organizations in many countries both in the East and the West. The name of Ralph Nader from USA has to be mentioned in this context. He produced a book based on his research known as UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED, which revolutionized safety standards in the car industry not only in the USA, but all over the world. By his sheet persistence, he was able to influence the car industry to incorporate safety devices in the automobiles and caused the industry to apply its...
brakes sharply. Other industries and consumer service were quick to pay heed to product safety, as consumerism gained momentum, the magnitude of the problem has caused the American Government to allocate more than a hundred million dollars annually to improve the quality and safety characteristics of various products.

In a free economic set up, the consumer is said to be sovereign. Business organizations are generally expected to formulate their policies in such a manner as to provide a very important place to the consumer interest. Theoretically, consumer is the boss. He gets what he wants. In other words, the consumer has the right to choose, right to represent. The sale of the product is controlled by the decision of the consumer.

Unlike the advanced countries consumerism in India is in its infancy, it is just like a movement which can be equated with several other social movement e.g. Independence movement, civil right movement etc. It is the result of a social conflict and can not therefore be wished away. It will be with us till the conflict facing the consumer is resolved. So, it is the need of the hour that consumerism must be developed in a concrete shape.

Similarly, there is little doubt that any movement to spread consumer awareness in a society like ours, with a rapid population growth, a vast unorganized sector of trade and manufacture and high levels of illiteracy, needs governmental intervention to give it more teeth. Over the years, because of an incipient but growing awareness of the multi practices indulged in by trade and manufacture, the government has introduced an array of laws designed to protect the consumers interest. These include the Indian Sale of Goods Act, prevention of Food Adulteration Act, Drugs Control Act, Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisement) Act, Essential Commodities Act, Standards of Weights of Measures Act, Trade And
Merchandise Act, Indian Standards Institution (certification Mark) Act, prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Practices Act. In addition to these the Indian Penal Code 1860 also comes to the rescue of the consumers. Section 264 to 267 of the Penal Code relating to false weights and measures, sections 272 to 276 relating to adulteration of food drink and drugs and section 479 to 489 relating to property marks also provides protection to consumer interest.

But these laws have not had the desired effect in preventing both organized and unorganized business from using unfair means to palm off their shabby products on the unsay buyer, To cite an example an official survey has noised that the Indian consumer is cheated of about of Rs.1,600 crores a year through defective weights and measures and this is despite the laws framed to prevent such unfair practices.

Similarly, though the public sector has been developed and expanded to serve the public interest by providing effective competition to the private sector, increasing production, improving distribution etc, it is yet to produced benefits commensurate with the investment. It is an irony that though consumer welfare is an avowed objective of public sector, in certain areas the poor performance of the public sector monopolies has made the plight of the consumer more miserable. Some of them even charged with unfair trade practices. For instance, electricity – consumers are compelled to pay service charges for the service they never or hardly receive. Such is the plight of the telephone consumer also. In the above of the state owned road transport corporations, it is common that passengers who have paid fares for luxury of express services are compelled to travel in ordinary coaches.

2.12
Profiteering in the guise of local taxes is widely prevalent. Though the maximum retail price is printed on packet of a product, the phrase, local taxes extra, provides retail enormous scope for profiteering. Similarly, ISI entrusted with the task of setting and enforcing standards for manufactures, has failed to make any appreciable impact on the consumer or the manufacturers despite decades of its existence. A large number of household gadgets used are not only of inferior quality but pose a threat to the life of user.

The brightening scenario of above environment forced the consumer movement to take its own shape. The consumer movement is gaining momentum in India and consumer groups are doing well espousing a number of causes. Voluntary consumer bodies like the Indian Federation of consumer organizations, Consumer Education and Research centre, national consumer Protection Council, Consumer Guidance Society, Professor of Bombay, 187 consumer groups exist in India. However these groups are isolated from one another, and the weakest link of the movement is lack of concerted action. The groups need to co ordinate their efforts and also develop relations with corporate bodies and insist upon corporations to set up consumer relations departments. To make it more effective, the government could put a substantial portion of its resources in the development of consumer interest. In fact is should evolve a national consumer policy and frame guideline on the use of fund by voluntary agencies that promote consumerism.

CONCEPT OF CONSUMER

The word consumer is self – explanatory and the literal meaning is “One who consumes” but as against a customer in the market place, a consumer has a wider and broader meaning .” In traditional theory
the consumer is considered to be well-informed about costs, price and quality of goods. But in the real world, things are different. According to Galbraith, consumer is a puppet and captive of business."

Adam Smith observed that, "Consumer is the sole end and purpose of all production and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer." Consumers are individual members of the general public, purchasing or using goods, property of services for private and not for professional purpose.

Anyone who spends money or exchanges articles for goods and services may be called a consumer. He must be protected from unfair trade practices, in order to seek a healthy economy of the country and welfare to the consumer.

Consumer can be defined as, an individual who purchases and uses products and services in contrast to manufacturers who produce the goods or services and wholesalers or retailers who distribute and sell them.

A consumer according to Collins English Dictionary is, "a person who purchases goods and services for his own personal needs." The Random House Dictionary defines consumer as, "a person or organization that uses a commodity or services."

The Consumer Protection Act, 1978 of Finland, defines 'consumer' as" a person who acquires consumer goods or services primarily for his personal use or for use in his private household."

The Consumer Protection Act, 1987 of the United Kingdom defines the term, 'consumer' as under :

(a) A consumer in relation to any goods means any person who might wish to be supplied with the goods for his own private use or consumption.
(b) In relation to any services or facilities, means any person who might wish to be provided with any services or facilities otherwise than for the purpose of any business of his.

(c) In relation to any accommodation, means any person who might wish to accommodation otherwise than for the purpose of any business of his.

**Consumerism**

The term consumerism was first coined by businessmen in the middle of 1960's as they though of the consumer movement as another "ism" like socialism and communism, threatening capitalism. The philosophy of marketing is based on consumer. The consumer is not only the heart of marketing but also the controller of marketing functions.

Consumerism is a movement that promotes the interest of buyers of goods and services. It strives to protect the consumer from unsafe or low quality products, fraudulent advertising, labeling, packaging and business practices that limit competition. It promotes adequate information about the producer so that consumer can take wise decisions in purchasing goods and services. Consumerism also tries to inform consumers of the effective means of obtaining compensation for damage or inconvenience caused by defective products and services.

Consumerism is not limited to organized efforts only but is a social movement seeking to augment the rights and powers of buyers in relation to sellers.

Consumerism is an organized effort of consumers seeking redress, restitution and remedy for dissatisfaction they have accumulated in the acquisition of their standard of studied.

Consumerism is the policy or programme of protecting the
rights and interests of the consumer.

Consumer is a social force within the environment designed to aid and protect the consumer, by exerting legal, moral and economic pressure on business.

Consumerism means that the consumer looks upon the manufacturer as somebody who is interested but who really does not know what the consumer’s realities are. He regards the manufacturer as somebody who has not made the effort to find out, who does not understand the world in which the consumer lives and who expects the consumer to be able to make distinctions which the consumer is neither willing nor able to make.

Consumerism is a form of advocacy that seeks to protect and broaden the rights and powers of consumers. It is a demand that marketers should give greater attention to consumers' wants and desires. It is a protest against abuses and malpractice in the marketing system.

The environmental view of consumerism is one that is increasingly interwoven with and converging on common issues. It encompasses the evolving set of activities of Governments, business, independent organizations, that are designed to protect the rights of consumers. It is concerned with protecting consumers from all organizations with which there is an exchange relationship.

Consumerism provides business with a challenges to take effective measures and to reexamine its marketing philosophy, practices and programmes which affect short- and long–run consumer satisfaction in a manner consistent with public welfare. So enduring is today’s consumer protection movement that it can be counted on to operate as a major force of influence in the years ahead.

Consumerism involves the actions of individuals and organizations; consumer himself as buyer, government as regulator of commerce and competitor in commerce and the businessman as a producer and distributor or seller of goods in response to consumers'
dissatisfaction arising from the exchange relationships.

Consumerism is the public demand both for refinement in marketing practices to make them more informative, more responsive, more sincere, more truthful and more efficient and for a new concern with factors other than privately consumed goods and services, that determine the quality of life. The new growing interest for the quality of life translates itself into demand for more public goods and services such as better highways, more education, better transport, better environmental conditions, conversion of natural resources and so on. Thus it represents the vital aspects of socially responsible marketing.

**NEED FOR CONSUMERISM**

The need for consumerism has been primarily due to the indifference of the business community. The main aim of all business is to maximize profit. Consumers have not only been called upon to pay higher prices but also have to settle at lower quality, spurious, duplicate and adulterated products that are being sold through misleading and powerful advertisement media. Hence, consumerism is required to protect consumer interest.

The producer has the power to design the product, distribute, advertise and price it, but the consumer has only the power of not buying it. One may argue that the producer runs his business with greater risks in spite of having several rights, because the veto power remains with consumer. However the consumer often feels that while he has the power of veto, he is not always fully equipped to exercise that power. This situation may be the effect of lack of information, too much indigestible information or even misinformation from one or several competing producers. Consumerism is like any other social movement. It has a big role to pay in the world of business and as such it has to be studied.
USES OF CONSUMERISM

Well - organized and dynamic consumerism may be expected to produce the following results:

i) Producers and sellers will not take the consumer for granted. When consumers strive to protect their rights, business will be compelled to shun its unfair trade practices.

ii) Consumerism will provide feedback for the business. It will enable the producers to understand the consumer's needs and wants. This will assist in the more effective implementation of the marketing concept or societal marketing concept, depending upon the nature of consumerism.

iii) Producers will be able to enlist the support of consumers to minimize the imperfections in distribution. Several times the supply position is made worse by hoarding and back marketing by traders. The sellers have a tendency to charge a price which is higher than the actual by giving some reason or the other.

iv) Consumerism will make the government more responsive to consumer interests, prompt it to take necessary statutory measures and make the required institutional arrangements to safeguard consumer rights.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF CONSUMERISM

During the late 1800's the sale of many impure and unsafe products led to an increase of consumer interest in legislation to bring about standards of quality. Some consumer groups existed in the United States as early as the middle of the 19th century. Formation of the National Consumer League in the USE in the year 1899 was an –
indication of the growing strength of the consumer movement. The
Novelist Upton Sinclair wrote "The Jungle" (1906), which described the
filthy conditions in the meat packing industry. This book led to the
passing of Federal Food and Drugs Act of 1906.

The growth of large corporations and monopolies also
contributed to an increased interest in consumerism. These giant
business companies lacked competition from other firms and so they
regulated the supply of products and charged high price for them.
They also marketed many low quality products. In the late 1980’s the
congress passed the first anti-trust and anti-monopoly laws to protect
consumers from the powerful firms. Business also began to advertise
extensively to distinguish their product from those of other
companies. As a result, the consumer movement began to emphasize
the consumer’s right to have adequate information about product.

In 1929, Consumer Research, a pioneer in product testing, was
founded to provide testing and rating services for consumers. A group
of employees from that organization formed the consumers’ Union in
1936. the passage of the 1938 Federal Food Drug and cosmetic Act
was an important landmark in the growth of the Consumer
Movement.

In the 1950’s an unprecedented volume of federal legislation
favoring consumers was passed. The Food Additive Amendment and
the textile Fibre Product Identification Act were passed during 1958.
President John F. Kennedy formed the consumer Advisory Council in
1962 and sent the first Presidential consumer message to the U.S.
Congress.

In 1960, the International Organisation of Consumers’ Union
was established in the Hague for the protection of consumers Ralph
Nader, a leading consumer in his book “Unsafe at Any Speed”(1965)
maintained that many kinds of automobiles were unsafe. His book led
to the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. This law
established safety standards for motors vehicles. Nader and his group of investigations, often called Nader's Raiders, also increased consumer interest in the safety of other products.

During the 1970's which was a period of inflation, consumers became increasingly interested in exercising their rights. Inflation helped the growth of consumerism because of the greater public concern with the cost and quality of products when prices went up continually. Consumer's boycott of beef, coffee and sugar succeeded in temporarily lowering the prices of those products in the mid 1970's.

Today, consumer groups play a larger role than ever before in supporting the inputs of consumers. Ralph Nader founded an organization in the name of the public citizen, which conducts research on products, works to influence Congress and state legislatures and develops educational programmes for consumers.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSUMER MOVEMENT**

The important objectives of the consumer movement are as follows:

1. To restore the balance in the buyer-seller relations in the market place.
2. To protect and promote the consumer's interest.
3. To safeguard consumer right.
4. To prevent consumer exploitation by unscrupulous traders.
5. To represent consumer interest before the Government and pressurise the Government to provide a meaningful consumer protection through proper legislation.
6. To organize consumer resistance against unfair trade practices and create a strong public opinion in favour of fair trade practices.
7. To collaborate with Government and business centers for consumer protection.

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8. To undertake programmes of consumer education. Consumer information and comparative testing.
9. To ensure consumer-oriented practices of marketing programme by business enterprises and
10. To redress the affected consumer through Government and non-Government organizations.

Consumer Movement thus represents an organised, collective and united effort to create a buyers' market for all mass consumption of goods.

CONSUMER MOVEMENT ABROAD

The Consumer Movement organised in the United States, was a countervailing defensive force to safeguard the interest of the consumers from the abuses of economically powerful sellers and it spread gradually to many parts of the world. In some countries it became a deep-rooted movement and in others and highly militant movement. The nations where the consumer movement has shown much strength are the United States of America, Britain, Germany, New Zealand, France and Japan. Developments and method of coping with it differed from country to country and awareness of consumers also varied from one country to another. It was neither exclusive to any specific country, nor was it confined to any particular continent. In fact, the consumer movement became a world-wide phenomenon.

In the United States, the business scene has witnessed three District consumer Movements in the early 1900's, mid-1930's and in 1960's.

Housewives in England also faced the same situation of seller's sharp practices in the market place, although common law protected the consumers against aggressive salesmanship, fraud and breach of promise. The British national Standard Institute in the UK played a
significant role in protecting the interest of consumers in 1925. Similarly consumer awakening was witnessed in Netherlands in 1926.

The several phases the American Consumer Movement in mid-1930's was developed by factors like an upturn in consumer prices in the midst of the great depression. In 1935, a formal consumers' Union came into existence. It established a laboratory for regular testing of as many goods as possible and published "consumer reports" thereon. The Union also criticized misleading advertisements and challenged the manufacturers who made money from ignorant consumers.

Consumer organizations came into existence in Norway and Ireland in 1939 and 1942 respectively. Norways' consumer body was not essentially different from that of the United States, although it did not define its policy in the same way as the American Consumers' Union did.

As in England, women's organizations in most of the European countries have been a mainstay of the consumer movement. Housewives took much interest in it. In addition to organizations like Japanese "Shufuren", there were other main Consumer' Unions, Grossroot Consumer Groups and the like. While functioning autonomously, they joined together from time to time, for joint action.

A 'Retail Trading Association' was formed in England to resolve disputes between retailers and consumers. Because of the rapid interest taken in the consumer protection, a Committee was formed by the British Government in the late fifties to suggest desirable changes in the existing laws and to ensure further protection of the consuming public.

The Canadian Association of Consumers composed of women, deals with cases of products, packing, labeling, pricing and
advertising. This amounts to an association being required to be consulted on any change in price, size and packaging of the products in existence or of the products that are likely to be introduced.

In Denmark, an aggrieved consumer can lodge a complaint with the Housewives' Consumer Council stating that he has been palmed off by a certain company. The dissatisfied purchaser will be either replacement or free repair or his money back ultimately.

As early as 1948, the Danish Government Home Economics Council was created to promote healthy hygiene, standard nutrition and worthwhile household goods. In Belgium, a Consumer Council was set up in 1964, in order to look into the problems of the consumers. In France, a National Commission on consumer Problems was established under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs comprising representative of consumer organization, manufacturers, distributors, educationists and the Government.

In South-East Asia, there are a number of well-established consumer protection organizations in 14 Asian and Pacific countries. The consumer Association of Malaysia is well organised, carrying out product test, publishing a number of worthwhile reports on products and selling techniques in developing countries and it has been responsible for promoting the consumers' cause.

The Women's Association in South Korea is the motive force behind the consumer movement. It considers the consumer movement as a human right's movement. The consumer movement in the Philippines celebrates at the end of October every year, "Consumer Protection Week" and provides product tests and the results are published periodically in a regular magazine.

**Consumer Protection and Consumer Psychology**

We are now living in the age of specialization. The advises of experts and practicing consultants are now available for every kind of
physical, scientific and behavioral problems. Psychology has now come to rescue of common masses to a great extent to solve the problem related with their behavior and behavioral issues. Consumer as a class also needs suggestions, guidance, and expect advice to regulate, control and monitor their behavior. A behavioral analyst can definitely advice the buyers class as to how to regulate their behavior. Consumer psychology is a specified branch of psychology that includes principles, generalizations, concept and theories that are intended to explain or predict human behavior in buyer-seller-marker transactions involving both products and services. It also recognizes the need to study the antecedents as well as the consequences of such transactions not only as they are related to individuals but in turn as they affect society as a whole.

Consumer psychology is study of people who buy and use a variety of products and services. It deals with their motives, their expected and actual satisfactions, and many environmental and inner influences that contribute to the buying process and motives. It deals with interaction with the individuals, groups and institutions that for better or worse have more or less recognized the need to protects, represent or help the consumers.

Many experts opine that, consumer psychology involves not only the body of knowledge of psychology and its applications but also interactions of people both as individuals and as members of groups. It includes even the efforts of activists who try to deal with the problems and resolving the conflicts of various decisions of consumer interests.

Consumer psychology requires the use of scientific method, that emphasize acceptable research procedures as the means of gathering and interpreting data before achieving a level of generalizations or conclusions.
A consumer is a buyer or user of products all the time. But not all people are consumers all the time. Rather, all people are consumers all of the time. People are consumers when they are buying or using products or services. Consumer psychology includes the study and the consciousness of people as consumers.

Consumer psychology uses the methods of psychology in an objective fashion to study the issues of consumer affairs. By its very objectivity it adds to more information, and knowledge and it is hoped better solutions than often one sided, narrow and even incorrect solutions proposed by business government agencies, or even by the consumers. It is obviously necessary to prevent fraud and deceit that often threatens the safety, well being and health of the consumer.

The science of consumer psychology musty dedicate itself to the goals of understanding the consumer's behavior and understanding the consumer behavior and protect their interests. For this purpose consumer class. It should educate, awaken and alarm the consumers about the issues that bother the consumers' interests. It should explain as to how a wrong buying decision influences his economic and social well being adversely.

The problems and issues of consumer affairs are interpreted or perceived in many ways. There are different views of the experts, academicians, tradesman and representatives of business houses as to how to protect consumers. Many experts feel that, consumer problems are caused by business forcing people to buy what they do not want or misrepresenting products and services. There is a truth in the argument as it may happen in certain cases. It has happened to some of us some times. However, this is not the sole reason for the exploitations of consumer. There are also groups of experts who favor a totally market economy and free market mechanism to operate. The assumption behind this belief is that, consumers are always free to make fair and independent choices. However, both the
arguments are having many limitations.

The issues confronting to consumers are real and must be faced rationally and in a realistic manner. The representatives of business associations, the lawmakers, the consumer activities have view, contradictory to each other. The businessmen feel that, the issues and problems are not real. They feel that this is hype created by the newspaper columnists and activists, who do not know much about trade practices.

The lawmakers often consider the hypothetical situations and offer hypothetical solutions. In certain cases the solutions offered by the law makes do not provide any real solace to the consumers. At times they appear to favor a particular class of users or consumers whereas in certain cases they favor restrictions and protections. Thus, it often results into confusion of government and enforcement agencies.

The concepts of self-regulation to protect consumers appear to be more realistic to improve situations and solve problems self control on the part of business is a better solution to avoid many confronting situations and to protect the business interest without putting consumers to a loss.

When the business groups, trade associations and representatives of trading community demand protection or a favor, it is often try to make laws or amendments that are beneficial to them or protect the self interest.

The same group will staunchly oppose laws introduced by others and argue that such laws are not in the best interest of the country or will raise price if not wreck the total economy.

The problem with government role in consumers offers that sometimes its representatives act as if they had some mysterious, omniscient and almost holy way of deciding themselves to protecting
the consumers. A careful and well-defined study in consumer behavior can solve this problem to a great extent. It can help the government agencies in the following ways:

1. It can suggest government leaders and lawmakers as to how and what legislation should be enacted to protect consumer's interests.
2. It can help understand the consumer behavior in its right perspectives.
3. It can help to know the real issues and problems related to the behavior of consumers and what are the reasons behind occurrence of such problems.
4. It can help to improve the quality of legislation and adopt better methods to improve the scope of legislation.
5. It can help the activists group to know how to convince the consumers and create desired level of awareness.

CONSUMERISMS IN INDIA – NEED FOR INFORMATION ORIENTED CORPORATE ACTION PROGRAMME

Consumerism has grown in India over a period of time as a social phenomenon. It has acquired considerable potential to influence business decision making and public policy formulation. This paper attempts to highlight major indicators of consumerism in India, identifies its cause and outlines the alternative options available to consumers when interface with dissatisfaction. The paper described and discusses the need for a configuration of an information oriented corporate action program designed to assist corporate management's to convert consumerism to a mutually profitable proposition.
Consumerism has been defined as the organized efforts of consumer seeking redress, restitution, and remedy for dissatisfaction they have accumulated in the acquisition of their standard of living. It is also said to include, a widening range of activities of Government, business and independent organizations that are designed to protect individuals from practices (of both business and Government) that infringe upon their rights as consumers. Over a period of time when these efforts of consumers and others directed at safeguarding consumer interests attain a consistency and / or institutionalized these efforts may be referred to as consumer movement in a society.

The indicators:

The emergency and existence of consumerism in India is indicated by number of factor like e.g. presence of organised consumer group, consumer protection legislation, judicial decisions, and consumer prone press.

According to recent study, nearly 187 consumer groups exist in India which organize consumers and direct their efforts and energies towards safeguarding consumer interests. Out of these nearly 20 each exist respectively in Delhi and Ahmedabad, In the country among the more visible groups include, such as, consumer education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, Consumer Guidance Society, Bombay, and Mahila Dakshta Samiti, Delhi. These groups have been spearheading consumer movement in the country. The number of new and less visible consumer group doing some tangible work in this area have been slowly but steadily growing.

Consumer protection legislation, too, has been slowly but steadily growing in the country. Both the parliament and State legislatures have evinced considerable interest in solving consumer problems and have enacted many laws aimed to protect consumer interest. In the country there exist nearly thirty major laws which –
provide to consumers means and avenues to seek redressal, restitution, and remedy against exploitation and damage to the legitimate interests of consumers. In order to impart proper trust to consumerism in India, a major legislation, consumer protection bill, is pending with the Parliament. The bill provides for a comprehensive set of provisions to protect consumer interests and to institutionalized consumer grievance redressal machinery. The bill envisages, inter alia, constitution of a Consumer protection Council, Directorate of consumer protection council, Directorate of consumer protection and a consumer dispute redressal forum. The council would act as the watchdog of consumer interests whereas the Directorate will be a window to receive consumer complaints to ensure effective implementation of various consumer protection laws operating in the country. The Forum will settle all consumer disputes other than those dealt with by the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC).

The quality of judicial decisions in the country also indicate a very sympathetic disposition of judicial institutions towards problems of consumers and their adequate redressal. Among these institutions MRPTC has made a landmark in the history of consumerism in the country. It has successfully launched a number of investigations many of them suo moto, against restrictive and unfair trade practices followed by firms in India. During the year 1985-86, it has already disposed of nearly 50 cases of unfair trade practices and issued, cause and desist, orders against companies following them, some of which are leading names in the country, in a number of cases it has also issued interim injections so as to insulate consumer interests from any further damage till the matter is decided either way.

The press, the fourth estate of democracy, too has been very actively supporting the cause of consumerism by highlighting the -
exploitative, restrictive and unfair trade parties violate of consumer meanest of the consumer movements but also writing very powerful edits in order to underscore the need for consumer protection.

Consumer Protection & Conceptual Analysis.

In the olden days, before the industrial revolution, the nature of society was monolithic and the needs of the people were very small. Most of the people lived in rural areas and the farmers produced a substantial portion of the goods needed by them. Even for people studied in cities, the needs were much limited. Business was small and the manufacturers produced only those items which were greatly needed by the society. As the economy became industrialized and then society pluralistic, the raw materials changed their 'character' under the complicated process of production and improved technology. New products appeared and old products became more refined and complex.

The modern consumer has to depend on the businessman for every activity. This dependency of the consumer is only one side of the coin, on the other side the businessman has the responsibility to protect and satisfy the consumer, by offering quality commodities in right quantity, and at reasonable prices. The important of the consumer in business has yet to be realized fully. In general, consumers are scattered and disorganized. Individually they have very weak bargaining power. They are not professional buyers. Besides, they have an additional handicap as majority of them are illiterate, ignorant and they usually suffer from lack of information to make any intelligent purchases.
India has been a seller's market where the manufacturer and the trader have been able to sell anything produced. This has resulted in the vast body of consumers being exploited both in terms of quality and quantity of goods. Sub-standard and unsafe products are being pushed into the market. The consumer has neither the technical know-how nor the necessary ability to judge the quality of products purchased by him. Hence, the government has an important role to play in ensuring the satisfaction of the consumer and safeguarding his interests.

The growth of advertising and large-scale production and introduction of pre-packing and self service have made efficient low-cost retailing possible. However number of competing brands and the type of consumer goods render the problem of choice more acute; and the highly complex and the technical composition for many modern products makes it difficult for the consumers to be reliably informed about their qualities and performance. Also high pressure advertising and sales techniques may sometimes result in a divergence between the consumer's demand and his real needs.

The consumer therefore, need legal protection both against artificial price fixing and undesirable practices by monopolies and also against fraud and mis-representation by a minority of less scrupulous traders and producers.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to highlight the legislative measures passed by the government to safeguard the interests of the consumers. The Consumers Protection Act, 1986 and the Consumer Redresal Machinery established at District, State and National levels have been discussed in the earlier part of this chapter. The profile of seven selected sample consumer Disputes Redressal Forums are also analysed.
Legislative Measures

The government has been enacting from time to time various laws for the protection of the consumer. Legislation gives statutory protection to innocent and ill-informed consumers against unfair trade practices. In the past, marketing legislation was by and large, business-oriented and not consumer-oriented. Often the legislation wanted to encourage competition and competitive market. Consumer benefit or protection was incidental. The benefit went to the producer often. Since 1945, all over the world, the consumer was hit heavily by inflation. The evils of inflation compelled the governments to offer direct consumer protection against unfair trade practices. Hence there has been a series of consumer-oriented legislations.

The government has enacted Consumer Acts to control buyer-seller relations in the market place and to regulate protection, supply, quality, quantity, price, distribution, terms of sale, trade practices and so on. All these Acts except Consumer Protection Act, 1986, are not preventive in nature but they prescribe fines and punishments to the offenders. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (COPRA) is not only preventive but also punitive in nature. The Act intends to provide simple, speedy and inexpensive redressal to the grievances of the consumers. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 is thus a milestone in the history of socio-economic legislation in the country. It is one of the most progressive and comprehensive prices of legislative enacted for the purpose of protecting the interest of consumers.

CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 1986

Distinctive Features

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, is known in short as COPRA. Its provisions are very comprehensive and they safeguard the economic -
rights of the consumers effectively. This Act is based on the principle of 'Self-help' to protect oneself against all kinds of exploitative and unfair dealings such as over-pricing, defective goods and cheating. The Act redefines the legal relations between consumers of goods and services and their sellers and manufacturers. The Act has two important implications for the consumer such as the right to complain to an authority and also claim compensation for any loss or injury suffered on account of the negligence of the manufacturer. The Act applies to all goods and services in both private and public sectors except those rendered free of charges or under a personal service contract.

The Indian Parliament enacted this legislation in December 1986. It came into force on April 15, 1987 and all provisions came into operation in July 1987. The Act provides for the establishment of Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies at District, State and National levels for the Protection and promotion of the interests of consumers and to redress their grievances in a speedy, simple and inexpensive manner.

The redressal agencies are required to dispose of each complaint within 90 days. There are no legal formalities for filing the complaint, which can be addressed to the concerned forum even through a postcard notifying the grievance and the names and addresses of the complainant and respondent. There is no need to pay any court fee for filing cases as in the civil court. It also provides for setting up Consumer Protection Councils in the States and Center to promote and protect the interests of the consumers. The prominent features of the COPRA are discussed under the headings noted below:

I. Conceptual Clarification
II. Consumer Protection Councils
III. Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies
IV. Allied Acts.

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I. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, defines the following concept.

(A) CONSUMER MEANS ANY PERSON, WHO

(i) buys goods for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment and includes any user of such goods other than the person who buys such goods for consideration paid or promised or partly paid or partly promised or under any system of deferred payment when such use is made with the approval of such person but does not include a person who obtains such goods for resale or for any commercial purpose or

(ii) hires any services for consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment and include any beneficiary of such services other than the person who hires the services for consideration paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment, when such services are availed of with the approval of first mentioned person.

Thus the definition of ‘Consumer’ as per the Act, 1986 clarifies who a consumer is. He may be the

(i) buyer of any goods for a full or partly paid consideration or of deferred payment.

(ii) user of such goods other than the person who actually buys the goods and such use is made with the approval of the purchaser.
(iii) hirer of any service for a full or partly paid consideration or of deferred payment
(iv) beneficiary of such services from the original hirer.

However the following persons are not considered consumers.
(i) A person who buys goods for any commercial or resale purpose or without any consideration
(ii) A person who receives services without any consideration

Thus, any person who buys goods or services on payment of money for a consideration is a consumer, but a person who purchases goods for resale or for any commercial purpose is not a consumer. In other word if the goods purchased or used for a large-scale business activity intended to earn profit, the purchaser is not a consumer. If he uses the goods for personal purpose or exclusively for the purpose of earning his livelihood by means of self-employment, he will be a consumer. To quote an example, a person who buys a type-writer or a car and uses it for his personal use is certainly a consumer. But a person who buys a type-writer to take up job-work and earn money or a car to ply it as a taxi and earn profit can be said to be using the type-writer or the car for commercial purpose. If the buyer uses the goods by himself, that is, by means of self-employment, for earning his livelihood, it would not be treated as a commercial purpose and he does not cease to be a consumer for the purpose of the Act.

CONSUMJERISM THROUGH STANDARDISATION

1. The consumers are still craving for their due importance in the economy. The business earns profit only when the goods are consumed and services unutilized by the consumer and hence the survival and growth of business depends upon the
satisfaction of consumers. But unfortunately the focal point of all business activities happens to be production and only lip services are offered to the consumers. It is however encouraging to find that recently the frame of reference of the society all over the world is undergoing a change and the business community has started thinking in terms of its social responsibility. Although to a great extent even now the businessmen are operating in the sellers market but after the second world war, more particularly during the last two decades, the consumerism has come up to rescue the consumers from the traditional selfish motives of the business. Consumerism attempts to augment and protect the rights of the consumers in relation to the producers.

In India, however, the situation is not so rosy. The producers have never faced any challenge from the consumers. They have so far been able to sell whatever they produced. Ever since the attainment of Independence the India Economy is of chronic shortages and growing inflation and hence the manufacturers have never bothered for the satisfaction of consumers and have always disregarded the modern marketing concepts.

2. Standardization in India

After the attainment of independence it was accepted that India is an industrially backward country and hence efforts were needed to plan the overall economic development of the country. In this regard the importance of standardization was realized as it provides an important communication link between the consumers needs and producers capabilities. The efforts were therefore put in the diverse fields of the economy with the objective to prepare standards relating to products and processes and promotion of their adoption at the national level. The -
certification marking for standards in India is done by the India Standards Institution on the basis of national standards, which are established on the consensus of opinion of all the interests concerned with the product. In the formulation of these standards due weightage is being given to the practices prevailing in different countries. The establishment of such standards provides a practical level of quality, which maybe achieved by the industry in the country and the products thus made may find widest acceptability. Political ideology, administrative set up, industrial culture, technological and economic infrastructure is some of the important factors, which play a role in determining the status of standardization in the country.

The pattern of adoption and implementation of standards in the country is done in a rather selective manner. The use of the ISI certification mark in the country is governed by the provisions of the India Standard Institution. (Certificate Marks) Act, 1952 and rules and regulations framed there under. Under the authority of this Act the Indian Institution issues license for the use of ISI certification Markets to such manufacturers only who give satisfactory evidence of being adequately equipped and who have incorporated a sound scheme for continuous inspection and checking of the quality of goods. The AIAl maintains its inspectorate to supervise the inspection and control operations of the different licenses as also to draw samples from various points of production, storage and distribution. Thus the ISI mark on a product conveys an assurance to the consumer that the product complies with the requirements of the standard under the well defined system in inspection, testing and quality control, which is devised and supervised by the institution and operated by the producer. The adoption of such standards in India is voluntary. The scheme is a sort of technical audit and provides total quality

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package to the manufacturers. It helps the manufacturers to improve and maintain their quality control system, which in turn would decrease the rejection and increase in marketability of products through consumer satisfaction and confidence.

The standards set by this situation are being increasingly adopted by public and private sector in the large as well as small scale industries. The standards in force under the scheme are around thirteen thousand and more than eleven thousand standard are in operation. The categories of items for which standards are being prepared comprises foodstuffs, sports goods, electric appliances agriculture equipment's cosmetics, blades etc. The common man in the country now understands that ISI certification mark means better quality of goods than those without the ISI marks. The salient features of this scheme are under:

1) The license is granted to a manufacture only when the institution is fully satisfied that the manufacturer is technically capable of producing the product according to the specifications of the revenant standard and on continuous basis.

2) The licensee monitors the quality control system as laid down by the finished product. Adopting the scheme of test as prepared by the Institution for each product separately does all this.

3) The Institution supervises provides surprise checks at the licensee’s factory. The institution draws samples of products from the production line and tests them at the factory’s laboratory and other independent laboratories recognized by the institution. Sometimes, the samples are also drawn from the market and from the consumer end.

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4) On the basis of his performance the licensee has to review the operation of the certification marks scheme every year and has to decide whether to continue the scheme or discontinue it.

3. Obstacles to Standardization:

Inspire of different advantages accruing from standardization different sectors of economy mainly consumers, it has failed to make an appreciable progress in those industries, where custom plays an important part in the distribution and sale of the product. Ignorance on the part of the consumers is another important obstacle. Other obstacle are based upon conflicts in jurisdiction, misunderstanding concerning the nature, use and scope of standards, conflicts of interest and fear of legal action. Lack of financial support and co-operation also comes in the way of effective performance of standardization measures.

There is, therefore, a pressing need to evolve particle basis for standards not only regarding quality but also concerning prices and services. In conclusion, it may be pertinent to observe that if standardization schemes are properly framed and implemented it will go a long way in protecting the interests of the consumers and will provide assurance of quality of goods and services purchased, better value of money spent and convenient methods for settling disputes with suppliers.

It is heartening to learn that a new consumer protection bills is being finalized to provide best guarantee to the protection is likely to ensure prompt redressal of grievances, the necessity of initiating and nurturing a powerful consumer movement from the grassroots level to the national level is there to emphasis that the Government alone would not be able to create consumer
consciousness and it will be upto the people and even the voluntary organizations to come forward and shoulder the responsibility.

BUSINESS RESPONSE TO CONSUMERISM

The University rising social conscience which finds expression in movements like consumerism pioneered by Ralph Nadir and John Banzhaf had added a new dimension to business decision making in U.S.A., U.K. and having its echo in other countries of the world. Now consumers have been getting organized so as to offer collective resistance to business's anti customer behavior and to put pressure on business to elevate consumer interest in desired way. Richard H. Busbirk and James. T. Rathe describes consumerism as the organized efforts of consumer seeking redress restitution and remedy for dissatisfaction they have accumulated in acquisition of their standard of living. Thus, consumerism can be properly explained as the organized activities and efforts of and/or for consumers designed to give them protection against commercial parties, which infringe upon their right as consumers. A ction for safeguarding the consumes; interest is the outstanding characteristic of consumer' organization. Actions taken by consumer federations or organization can be of various forms, e.g. to put pressure on government for passing and enforcing consumer protection laws, to make available authentic consumer information for wise buying decision, to eliminate unproductive middlemen etc.

President John F. Kennedy in his directive to the Consumer Advisory Council given in March, 1962, summed up the rights as: (a) right to safety, (b) rights to be informed, (c) rights to choose, and (d) right to be heard.

Right of safety means that the products should not cause any physical danger to consumers or put them in difficulty due to sudden failure, and high quality, reliability and performance standard of - 2.40
products should be assured. Right to be informed means that consumers as a matter of right demand the information on the quality, performance, and characteristics of products. They like to know what they are paying for before they would part with their money in exchange for goods. Right to choose implies that monopoly is disliked by consumers who do not want any pressure in making a decision to buy a particular product. They want to buy a product of their free will, and exercise their opinion for choose a particular brand or to decide about the quantity. Also in the absence of an adequate quality of supply, consumers feel that there is pressure on them in the matter or deciding about the quantity as well as brand. Thus the right to choose implied a market with ample quantity and variety. Right to be heard has even grater importance. Even if consumers have the right to safety, to be informed and to choose but to do enjoy the right to be heard, there would be no real control on other three rights. The right to be heard implies the existence of a legal framework.

CONSUMER MOVEMENT IN INDIA

Indian consumer from various unfair trade practices such as adulterated and sub standard goods, less weights and measures, fraudulent advertisement, high prices, black marketing and poor after sales service. It is (rightly) said that except mother's milk, everything is adulterated in India. Adulteration has become a small scale industry in India. A large number of adulterants are harmful to health. The drug racket is a menace to the consumer. The India market has been flooded with nearly 45,000 banned drugs, out of which nearly 35,000 are either useless or harmful. Where conditions were worse in other parts of the world, they found a solution in consumer associations, and now enjoy a good life.
In India, the Government has enacted the following important law has to protect the consumer.

- The agriculture produce (Grading & Marketing) Act, 1937.
- The Drugs & Cosmetic Act, 1940.
- The Indian Standards Institution (Certification Marks) Act, 1952.
- The Essential Commodities (Special Provision) Act, 1981.

But the loopholes in these Acts and the lethargic and corrupt enforcing machinery have made them not so very effective. However, constituted a Consumer protection council in November 1983. the prim Minister has recently initiated a number of steps to protect consumers from adulteration and high prices, a model bill providing for panel action for offenders and composition for victims is in the offering.

Mere Governmental legislation can not solve the problem. The only way out is through consumerism. In India, the consumer resistance movement is still in its infancy. The following important consumer organizations have come into being:

- Voluntary organization in Interest of Consumer Education (VOICE), New Delhi.
- Indian Federation of Consumers Organisation, New Delhi.
- Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad.
• Consumer Guidance Society of India, Bombay.
• Consumer Council of India, Madras.
• Akhil Bhartiya Grahak Panchayat, Pune, founded by Shri Bindu Madhav Joshi in 1974.

They are concerned with promoting consumer education and a wariness, settling consumer complaints, conducting consumer research and working in liaison with other organizations to find solution to consumer problems. Some of them get financial assistance and encouragement from the Government. There is vast scope for building up a massive and dynamic consumer movement in India.