MAP 1

CHANDIGARH AND ITS ENVIRONS

Source: Census of India, 2001
CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare’s philosophy through the words of Polonius in Hamlet echoes the content of the following thesis on the importance of textiles. Apparel proclaims the man and man’s discerning eye can lead him to buy what suits his purse. The well-known quotation of William Shakespeare from Hamlet was designed to bring into focus the consciousness of people in the sixteenth century. It has been well said ‘It is easy to be beautiful; it is difficult to appear so.” Clothes make a man but an irrational, impulsive splurging on textiles without a thought to the quality makes it relevant to whatever the contemporary times demand.

Clothing and other textiles are of great importance for the survival of the human race. Even in Roman times, textile played a key role in society. Everywhere from emperors to slaves, wore clothes and needed household fabrics for their daily use. Textile products play a vital role in meeting man’s basic needs. We often consider textiles only for the clothes we wear. However, textiles are also important in all aspects of our lives from birth to death. The use of textiles has been traced back to over 8500 years. From tree-bark to textiles, the story of man’s desire to adorn him has covered the entire span of civilization. Clothes have become the second skin for mankind. They express one’s personality, interests, and attitudes and also showcase the social group through historical evolution. The dress of an individual is a kind of sign language that communicates a complex set of information and is usually the basis on which immediate impressions are formed.

1.1 Role of Clothing

Clothing is connotative. It extends beyond the idea of simply covering oneself. It, in fact, relates to the concept of modesty from ‘Adimanav’ to modern man, clothing and other textile products have therefore generated a market. A market that was informal prior to the coming of money economy has now become formal and got institutionalized with the expansion of Industrial Society. From hand woven to spun to mill made cloth, the entire process of production was linked entirely to the consumer’s demand. Clothes in the modern world become almost as essential as food. It, therefore,
explains why the textile market is filled with a wide range variety of textile innovations so as to meet the increasing need of a growing population for textiles. Quite a lot of planning and research has been done for the development of textile industry but very little has been done to ascertain the quality control, pricing policy, stamping at every yard and other measures necessary for consumer satisfaction. Unfortunately consumer awareness is very low. Even the literate urban consumer is neither demanding nor getting the worth of his money. The problem becomes complex as manufacturers, retailers and marketing practices constantly deprive the consumer of his legitimate rights.

In the selection of fabrics, varieties of textile are available in the market. The urban consumers are showing more and more sophistication and it remains the endeavour of textile manufacturer to meet the ever-increasing demands of the consumers in an effective manner. Now-a-days the consumer is so bewildered by such a wide range of textiles of different blends, textures and prints that he is caught between quality and variety and he finds it difficult to make a choice between these textiles, deemed best from his/her point of view or requirements.

1.2 Consumer Plight in India

India is among the top textile manufacturers of the world having a large variety of products including natural, man made and mixed fabrics with varying textures in each category. However, industrialization and advancement of technology has completely changed the market scenario and consumer is faced with a plethora of choices. In the case of mixed fabrics, the proportions in which the natural and the synthetic fibre are mixed make a lot of difference in the profits of manufacturers but at a heavy cost to buyers. Such malpractices abound in the textile industry. False stamping is intended to convey superior quality or strength of the fabric than the real fact e.g. manufacturer may put a stamp of poly cotton, and buyer may interpret it as polyester cotton; while the mix may be of cotton and polyester, which is much cheaper than the polyester. Similarly very commonly printed composition of mixed fabric on the labels as 67% polyester and 33% viscose on testing may reveal that it had only 27% polyester and 73% viscose which is a poor quality weak fabric. Likewise there are many examples. Consumers are also misled when the manufacturer intentionally stamps the fabric as 'mercurised instead of proper word mercerized. Often poor qualities of such
fabrics are easily saleable because of low levels of consumer awareness, inept marketing standards and rampant malpractices in quality control.

Another type of sales technique to which buyers fall a prey is in the form of advertisements offering bargain sales, where sub standard ready-mades or suit lengths are sold, falsely claiming to have been manufactured by well-known companies. In another case, discounts range from 10% up-to 50% by branded companies to allure buyers in hundreds, but it only adds to their disappointment as 50% discount is only on outdated garments or on seconds which is nowhere written in the advertisement. Textile consumer is totally left at the mercy of producers or manufacturers because salesmen at retail outlets are neither familiar with textiles nor do they know the required composition of the fabrics on the 'bolts'.

1.3 The Textile Consumer

At present when consumer awareness has gained momentum and new laws are being enacted to protect and preserve the interests of the consumers, it is necessary to know and identify who is a textile customer. Unlike the earlier times when industry depended on the sources and forces of nature combined with the ability of people to utilize them as the only way of production. Today the market has been flooded with the entire spectrum of textile products, making selection process a difficult task. An insight into the above concept clicks a question as to who is ultimately involved in the so called “selection process”. And the answer to this question revolves around none other than the favourite marketing player ‘the consumer’.

The term consumer is a comprehensive term, which includes not merely a particular person or a class of people, but includes the entire society as a whole. In general, it can be said that the consumer is a person who:

- Buys any goods for his personal use and not for resale or any other commercial purpose, and
- Hires or avails of any service for some personal consideration.

The Oxford Dictionary defines consumer as “a person who buys or uses goods or uses services”\(^1\).

As per World Book dictionary “a person who uses food, clothing or anything grown or made by producers is a consumer”\(^2\).

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 defines a consumer as follows:-
One who buys any goods for consideration that has been paid or promised or partly promised or under any system of deferred payment.

It includes any user of such goods other than the person who actually buys goods and such use is made with the approval of the purchaser, but does not include a person who obtains such goods for resale or for any commercial purpose.

For the purpose of goods, a consumer means a person belonging to the following categories:

i) One who hires any service or services for a consideration, which has been paid, or except for person who hires for commercial purpose of promised or under any system of deferred payment.

ii) It includes any beneficiary of such service other than the one who actually hires the service for consideration and such services are availed with the approval of such person.

Thus, the one who purchases goods or services for his/her use is a consumer. The user of such goods or services with the permission of the buyer is therefore deemed to be a consumer.

1.4 Consumer and the Marketing Scenario

The principle of “Caveat Emptor” or “let the buyer beware”, has given way to the principle of “Consumer is king” in production economy, there is little scope for interaction between consumer and tremendous discrepancy exists between high-flown exaggerations through advertisements and the actual product.

Consumer is the focal point around which the whole marketing activity revolves. In a free enterprise economy, consumers are free to purchase what they please, limited of course, by income, socio-economic status and legal business forces. A seller has to organize the resources to satisfy his consumers. The satisfaction of the consumer’s needs and wants in fact provides the rationale for a firm’s existence. Knowledge of consumer behaviour has become vital for efficient execution of firm’s advertising and sales promotion policies. Satisfaction of the consumer is in fact the ultimate purpose of any marketing system. Marketing starts with the consumer and ends with the consumer. Now-a-days, a seller has to give delight to his customer in addition to satisfying him. Buying behaviour is assuming a greater significance day-by-day in the marketing process. Consumers have many layers of behaviour, which are
specific to particular products or services. A particular colour of cloth say ‘saffron’ or ‘white’ evokes a special attention and behaviour amongst a group of consumers, thus inducing the textile firm to manufacture the cloth of that colour to satisfy the needs of consumers.

1.5 Consumer Apathy

The importance of a consumer or customer can be realized through the placard frequently placed in shops “The Customer is always right”. Consumers play a very important role in the economy. All our present day activities are the results of the needs and desires of consumers only. They are the pillars of the economy. They are free to buy goods of the kind they like and the producers have to ascertain the tastes and preferences of this group and produce only those goods, which will help them to satisfy their needs and desires. But in the modern marketing system consumer sovereignty has become a myth because of a variety of problems in the process of production and distribution. Consumers face numerous problems in the market and in many cases they are harmed in every way physically, mentally or financially.

The main problem confronting the consumers is ignorance. Due to ignorance, apathetic consumers make no efforts, whatsoever to eliminate their problems. They do not resist and helplessly accept whatever is offered to them. Even elite and literate consumers are indifferent to these consumer problems. They themselves are responsible for encouraging such deceitful practices to occur repeatedly, by not raising their voice against them.

The world in which we live today stands in sharp contrast to the good old days when great grandma spun her own yarn, wove her own cloth, grew all the vegetables in her garden. It is simply because of the fact that the consumer and his needs were very simple and quite few in the past. After the liberalization in 1991 and the new technology have invaded almost all the fields of our life, our needs and requirements have inflated to a great extent. The impact of technology on the consumer is massive, since it has resulted in the technical sophistication of products. No longer does a simple plain cotton fabric satiate us. Today’s consumer wants a variety in terms of colour, design, fabric and prints. The technological revolution has led to the increase in the production of goods but at the same time it has posed some significant problems for the consumer.
1.6 Problems of Textile Consumers

In a free economy, consumer is the ‘King’, but in India, consumer has been duped and neglected over the years, particularly with reference to textile products. Due to the endless variety of fibres, fabrics and finishes, that sums up the textile range in the market. It carries with it a parallel range of confusion in the mind of the ultimate consumer who is not provided with the relevant information at the same pace. This produces a vacuum of suitable response and reaction. Instead it has increased the chaos. Moreover, today consumers live in a mass market and in many cases they do not come in contact with the producer and the supplier of the goods.

The woes of consumer do not end here. He has to face more problems related to quality, price, quantity and serviceability as well. The manufacturer tries to dupe him/her by all means. Deep-rooted cultural, economic, social and political factors have made Indian consumer a mere receiver rather than a chooser of what he/she would like to have and enjoy.

In short, the various problems faced by the textile consumer can be summarized as:

- Inability of a consumer to distinguish between the varieties of fabrics available in market.
- Lack of understanding of basic Textile terminology thereby forcing the consumer to buy on seller’s word.
- Lack of standardization procedures.
- Lack of proper quality assurance system.
- Lack of sufficient textile related information dissemination through different media channels.

To some extent the sellers and other environmental factors contribute to these problems, but consumers themselves are largely responsible for their plight. They are neither organised nor specialised which makes consumer guidance and information all the more crucial so that the interests of the consumers are not curbed by being allured, misguided and misinformed about the quality, quantity and durability of the product. In fact, consumers alone can eradicate these by becoming aware of the services and aids available to them and use this awareness and education to solve their problems as best as it is possible for them.
The manner in which a consumer uses the available protection services, would determines how best he can be served with quality products and services to enjoy his resources to the fullest extent. The only hope for consumers to overcome these problems is to educate themselves as much as possible about quality features, price, utility, latest technology and research related to products and services.

1.7 Consumer Education

The lack of awareness on the part of the consumers and absence of enlightened consumer organizations to protect their interests have complicated the process of product evaluation by the consumers. They lack knowledge on how to distinguish between the real and the deceptive textile goods. The objective of consumer education is to teach people how to seek out, use and evaluate consumer information so that they can improve their ability to purchase or consume products and services they deem most likely to enhance their well being. In addition to protective legislation and regulations, consumers need information and education to enable them to make wise buying decisions. Increasingly government policy makers and consumer advocates recognise that they cannot protect consumers against every possible market abuse and that the consumer’s best defence is better knowledge about the product.

The consumer education will make them more informed and better consumers. It will also help consumer to change his/her buying behaviour and he will be in a better position to make wise decisions. He will understand that the best choice for their next-door neighbour may not be best suited to him also. Consumer education will make them alert and cautious buyers. Each consumer is an individual with individual wants, needs and desires. He should learn to weigh all the possibilities and make the choice best suited to him as an individual. Consumer education and awareness therefore, would help citizens to improve the quality of life by developing resurgent attitudes towards their needs and wants. It helps to decide what and when and how to buy. It teaches them to discern the reasons for dissatisfaction with the particular product or service and to express their complaints and seek redressal. However, it is the right kind of education that would enable them to act as informed consumer, throughout their life.

The awareness of why certain consumer chooses certain things is the most important factor in consumer education. Clothing industries can rise to the helm of their power or sink to absolute ignominy because of their inaccurate assessment of
consumer’s choices. Therefore, consumer education directs both the producer and consumer to study motivating factors that lead to particular choices made by the consumer.

The world is advancing rapidly industrially, technologically and materially, thereby increasing the number and range of consumer products in the market, it is, therefore necessary to keep abreast with new trends and developments in the market. Consumers in advanced countries are much more conscious of these market developments and their rights, than consumers in India. It is therefore imperative to educate our consumers about their rights to make them better buyers and protect their best interests against the malpractices of businessmen.

1.8 Consumer Rights

In pre-industrial India, the consumer was a very simple man and all his trade practices were confined only to the local markets. He used to make purchases from a known shopkeeper, who showed a sense of responsibility to the buyer. The industrial revolution has given rise to the concept of competition. A large number of products with competing brands have flooded the markets. Now-a-days marketing is supported by aggressive promotional efforts. The worldly unwise buyer is misled by false media campaigns and the skillful advertisements because he does not have the technical knowledge necessary to analyze these, to make an intelligent choice between the products. The propaganda accompanying advertisements and claims is treacherously deceptive for the innocent consumer. The unscrupulous business practices gave an undue advantage to the unethical businessman and made honest practices unprofitable. Such unhealthy marketing practices led to the consumer movement and the emergence of a Consumer Bill of Rights in USA in 1962 when President John F. Kennedy emphasized four consumers’ rights.

These are:-
1. The Right to Safety
2. The Right to be Informed
3. The Right to Choose and
4. The Right to be Heard

This Bill of Consumer Rights is considered as the Magna Carta of consumer rights in every country.
In 1960, International Organization of Consumers Union (IOCU) was set up in USA. The over-riding concern of IOCU is to promote and protect the rights of consumers all over the world and to promote social justice and fairness in the markets. Now IOCU is known as Consumers International (CI). It has not only defined the consumers’ rights clearly but has also added three more rights and defined all of them. These rights are:

1. **The Right to Safety**: which means the right to be protected against products, production processes and services, which are hazardous to health or life.

2. **The Right to be informed**: which means the right to be given the facts needed to make an informed choice or decision. The right to be informed now goes beyond avoiding deception and the protection against misleading advertising, labeling or other malpractices. Consumers should be provided with adequate information enabling them to act wisely and responsibly.

3. **The Right to Choose**: which means the right to have access to a variety of products and services at competitive prices and in the case of monopolies, to have an assurance of satisfactory quality and service at a fair price. The right to choose has been reformulated to read: the right to basic goods and services. This is because the unrestrained right of a minority to choose can mean for the majority a denial of its fair share.

4. **The Right to be Heard**: which means the rights to be represented so that consumer’s interest receives full and sympathetic consideration in the formulation and execution of economic policy. The right is being broadened to include the right to be heard and represented in the development of products and services before they are produced or set up. It also implies a representation not only in government policies, but also in those of other economic powers.

5. **The Right to Redress**: which means the right to a fair settlement of just claims. The right has been generally accepted since the early 1970s. It involves the right to receive compensation for misrepresentation or shoddy goods or services and where needed, free legal aid or an accepted form of redress for small claims should be available.

6. **The Right to Consumer Education**: which means the right to acquire the knowledge and skills to become an informed consumer throughout life. The right to
consumer education incorporates the right to the knowledge and skills needed for taking action to influence factors, which affect consumer decisions.

7. **The Right to a Healthy Environment**: which means the right to a physical environment that will enhance the quality of life. The right involves protection against environmental problems over which the individual consumer has no control. It acknowledges the need to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.

An attempt has been made to empower the consumer in India through **Consumer Product Safety Act**. The draft policy, awaiting cabinet approval, aims at upgrading product and service standards to international levels. But it is facing resistance from government’s own Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to make companies and service providers more accountable to consumers.

The National Consumer Policy, being introduced by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) seeks the enactment of a ‘Consumer Products Safety Act’. Since it is necessary to pay a fee to qualify as a consumer, the new policy treats even the payment of Re. 1 for a service as a fee. This gives it teeth as all taxes, user charges and levies will qualify as consumer fees, bringing more government departments, including free health services, under its net.

Stake holders like state governments, departments of post and telecom, passport offices, municipal services, Cooperative Government Housing Society (CGHS) and railways, among others, fear a barrage of consumer-led litigation and are demanding exemption from the new rules. The private sector, however, is learnt to be supporting the policy as it is also the consumer of a huge basket of government services.

1.9 **Consumer Protection Act (CPA) India**

The Act pertains to all goods and services unless specifically exempted by the Central Government. The Act intends to provide simple, speedy and inexpensive redressal to the consumer’s grievances. For this purpose, the Act envisages a three-tier quasi-judicial machinery at the national, State and District levels. The Act enshrines certain rights of the consumers and provides for the setting up of Consumers Protection Councils at the Centre and in the States. The objective of these Consumer Protection Councils will be to promote and protect the rights of the consumers.
The Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 1986 to protect the consumer from defective goods and deficient services without much expense. The act applies to all goods and services. Section 6 of the CPA provides for the establishment of Central Consumer Protection Council to promote and protect the rights of the consumers such as:

- Right to safety of goods which are hazardous to life and property.
- Right to be informed regarding quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods.
- Right to choose from a variety of goods at competitive prices.
- Right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices and unscrupulous exploitation of consumers.
- Right to acquire the knowledge and skill to be an informed consumer.
- The right to consumer education.

**Amendments in the Act**

In 1993, the Government of India has brought in some progressive amendments through an ordinance for amending -

(a) The pecuniary jurisdiction of District Forum from Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs and that of State Commission from Rs. 20 lakhs to Rs. 1 Crore, and that of National Commission more than Rs. 1 crore.

(b) State governments are empowered to establish more than one District Forum in a district with large cities;

(c) Aggrieved party can institute or lodge a complaint at any place where branch office of the opposite party is situated.

(d) Right is granted to one or more consumers to institute a complaint where there are several consumers having the same interest.

(e) Definition of unfair trade practices had been incorporated at length in the Act.

(f) Use of consumer goods bought and used by him exclusively for the purpose of earning livelihood in case of self-employment is excluded from the definition of commercial purpose;
(g) Housing construction has been included within the definition of commercial purpose and;

(h) The redressal machinery has been given additional authority and powers. They can issue an order to the opposite party directing him to remove defects or deficiency in the services in question, or not to repeat them, not to offer hazardous goods for sale, and to provide for adequate cost to affected parties.

**Procedure to get redressal for a grievance under CPA**

Details of the method to file a complaint and to get relief under CPA is given in the following lines:

Person who can file a complaint must be an individual.

i) Consumer or

ii) Any voluntary consumer organization registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860 or Companies Act, 1956 or under any other law for the time being in force.

**Relief available to consumers under this act**

Depending on the nature of relief sought by the consumer, the redressal forum may give order for one or more of the following reliefs:

a) Removal of defects from the goods or deficiencies in services provided.

b) Replacement of the goods;

c) Refund of the price paid; or

d) Award of compensation for the loss or injury suffered;

e) To discontinue unfair trade practice or the restrictive trade practice or not to repeat them;

f) Not to offer hazardous goods for sale;

g) To withdraw the hazardous goods from being offered for sale.
Procedure for Handling Complaints under Consumer Protection Act, 1986

Complaints regarding
- Defect/Deficiency in goods/Service
- Unfair / Restrictive Trade Practice

May be filed within two years by
- Any Consumer
- Voluntary Consumer Association
- Central / State Govt.
- A few Consumers on behalf of many consumers

In appropriate forum / commission

Where value of goods / services and compensation claimed

- Does not exceed 20 lakhs
  - District forum
  - Appeal against order
- Is over 20 lakhs but not over 1 crore
  - State Commission
- Over 1 Crore
  - National Commission
  - Appeal against original order

Figure – 1

Grounds on which redressal may be sought:
1. To replace goods with new goods.
2. To return the price of goods or change of services to complaint compensation for loss or injury suffered by consumer due to negligence of opposite party.
3. To remove the defect.
4. Not to offer the hazardous goods for sale.
5. To discontinue the unfair trade practice or the restrictive trade practice or not repeat them.
6. To withdraw hazardous goods from being offered for sale.
7. To provide for adequate costs to practice.
8. Fine upto Rs. 10,000 for false, frivolous and vexation complaints.

1.10 Factors Influencing Buying Behaviour of Consumers

Tradition, culture, religion, family and society of which consumer forms a part normally influence consumer behaviour. In addition to this, environmental factors affect a consumer’s choices to a great extent. Besides these factors relating to behaviour of consumers in making choices, there are a number of factors, which influence his decisions about the purchase of different products, and selection of services. Some of these factors commonly believed to have an impact on consumer behaviour are:

Age: Age affects the kind of choice of a buyer. For example, young buyers prefer to purchase bright coloured and printed textile as compared to people who are advanced in age. They prefer purchasing light colours and cloth with embroidery. Again children make impulsive and emotional decisions while purchasing, whereas adults make decisions keeping in mind the factors related to prices.

Sex: Males and females differ in their product choices because of the basic differences in their personality. The males generally decide quickly and buy at the first shop where the required product is available while women will survey the market and then purchase the product. Discount sales generally attract women or free gifts offered sales. Their decisions are sometimes dominated by their emotions and not by any rationality.

Size of Family: Size of family also influences the buying choice of a consumer. Naturally a consumer having a large family will be influenced more by the price of the product and their purchase will have economic-angle. If consumer has a small family, cost of product or its price will not much affect him.

Social Status: Buying behaviour of consumers is greatly influenced by their social status. People belonging to higher income group will go for branded textile goods at the showroom. They spend more money on their luxurious needs as compared to their basic needs. A company President will always buy an expensive suit. Occupation also influences a person’s consumption choice. A blue-collar worker will prefer to buy work clothes and work shoes.
Nature of Occupation: Occupation also influences a person’s buying pattern. His requirements for products will be guided by his leisure time, company he keeps at work and his environmental locations. Marketers identify the occupational groups that have above average interest in their products and services, and then they try to specialize in their products for a particular occupational group.

Habits: Habits influence consumers’ choices greatly. A person accustomed to wearing synthetic clothes will rarely buy cotton or silk cloth irrespective of the weather. In the beginning the decision to buy a particular textile for dress may be affected by the economic factors but once it becomes a habit. It is often difficult to change one’s choice.

Educational Status of the consumers in a developing country like India with growing population holds a great importance. Education makes them knowledgeable, aware and rational consumers. They can easily find out the difference between the right and the wrong choice. Educated consumers can understand their right to be protected and raise their voice against any injustice done to them as well as to the society. The role-played by them in accepting or rejecting a product can decide the future prospects of a business.

Influence of fashion trends on purchase decision: Fashion reflects a way of life. It is a response to many things: a feeling, an event, an era, a crisis, an action, and current and the new fashion. That is what makes it an ever-changing captivating fact of our lives, a facet that needs exploration because it enhances and enriches life.

According to Oscar Wilde, “Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to change it every six months”. And another writer says “Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new.” During the last seventy five years, fashions have changed drastically in design, colour and cut of fabrics. These changes in fashion are a direct reflection of life styles. It is a mirror of social change, economic condition, technological advancement, psychological implications, culture and current events. Buyers’ decision also depends of the latest trends and fashions. It is fancy rather than taste, which produces so many new fashions.

Influence of Media: Media plays a vital role in consumers’ decision process. Advertisements are not only informative to bring awareness but also to persuade buyers to buy a particular product. Large promise is the sum of an advertisement. On the other hand it encourages people to live beyond their means. It is also the cheapest way of
selling goods. Advertisement is aimed both at image building and it satisfies the inner urges and desires of consumers to be associated with famous personalities as brand ambassadors. But not all advertisements are honest and truthful. Many are deceptive and they tend to hide the correct information from buyers. Moreover, media deliberately ignores social issues like health, safety, population and its impact on young generation.

Manufacturers can help consumers to make right decision by giving proper labels and markings on their textile products. They should abide by the laws as well as give the consumers their right to be protected against fraudulent practices by the sellers. **Environment:** Environment is the sum of the conditions that surround and influence a person and guides them in turn what they should wear. Just as fashion influences the clothing, similarly the environment in which living takes place, influences the dress and fashion styles. Economic, social and psychological factors are the areas of environmental facts that effect fashion or clothing practices of a person.

Sociological factors include leisure time, status of women, education, communications, print and visual media; store display sales etc. Psychological factors which are the primary characteristics of human behaviour such as boredom, curiosity, rebellion against convention, need for self-assertion and a drive for companionship strongly influence the buying decision of an individual.

Study of the consumer behaviour is a very important aspect of the marketing of various products including textiles. It projects the trends in manufacturing of textiles. The buying behaviour of people sets a path for the manufacturer to adopt a proper "Product mix". This is very important in planning for marketing of consumer goods particularly in textiles, where the consumer dictates his preferences. One person may choose particular textile goods for its low price, another for colour and fibre and brand. These aspects of buying behaviour and preference pattern will help the manufacturers and markers of textiles in evolving appropriate marketing strategies.

### 1.11 Various Aids Available to Consumers for Rational Purchase Decisions

Consumer aids are the tools, which a consumer can use not only in the selection of goods, but also to protect him against various fraudulent practices adopted by sellers in the marketing of these goods. It cannot be over emphasized, however, that none of
these aids can help unless the consumer has some basic knowledge of textile material as well as of his needs and habits.

The various aids available to consumers vary from quality certification marks on the products and labels, to voluntary and government agencies which can guide consumers to make rational and considered choices. While the voluntary organizations help consumers through education and information, the government agencies protect their interests through enactment of various Consumer Protection Acts and through setting up of redressal machinery to remove their grievances.

All the aids available to consumers are divided into following categories; Information, Product Safety, Protection, Education, Service.

**Information:** The right to be informed is the right of every consumer. Adequate knowledge of textiles would facilitate an intelligent appraisal of standards and brands of merchandise, thereby developing the ability to distinguish quality in fabrics and in turn to appreciate the proper uses. The consumer can obtain information from a number of sources such as:

1) **Informative Labels:** Informative labelling is the only source for consumer which can provide the desired information at the real point of sale and purchase and have a profound influence on consumer buying. It can prove to be a boon to an ordinary consumer and can help to provide accurate and factual information for all varieties of garments.

   Label is a display of written, printed or graphic matter. It may be a simple tag attached to the product or may be a part of it. The information given in the printed form on face plait or selvedge of textile products is called *markings*. Fibre and fabric manufacturers and suppliers should be responsible for effective labelling for providing clear instructions for use and care of the fabrics. Consumers must read the labels and hang tags carefully and use them for patronizing retailers for their purchases.

   Various kinds of labels are used on textiles. These are an important point of contact between a consumer and a manufacturer. To be really effective, they must give sufficient information to the consumer. Informative labels tell the consumer about performance i.e. degree of colourfastness, shrinkage, kind and quality of fabric used, how to care for it i.e. detailed instructions for washing, precautions in storage etc. Many manufacturers do spend a lot of time, money and efforts in providing good and
informative labels on the textile items but consumers generally do not read labels while making a purchase. The Textile Commissioner has prescribed the manner of markings to be stamped on the fabric along with its details. However, labels found on most fabrics leave much to be decided. Studies in the past have indicated that significant numbers of markings are only impressionistic and not informative. So a lot of information goes waste. Consumers must be educated to realize the importance of labels used in textiles. They must be enlightened and taught that these labels, if carefully read, can improve their ability to purchase better quality stuff. Misleading information and non-existent terms are found on these markings, thereby making information seeking all the more a difficult task. Thus, it becomes imperative for the consumer to be educated to read and understand the meaning conveyed by the labels. Good labelling is very important for keeping consumers away from wasting their money on poor selections. It can give them the satisfaction of getting what they want.

The responsibility for effective labelling lies with the fibre and fabric manufacturer, converters and suppliers for providing specific and clear instruction for the use and care of their fibre and fabrics. Consumers are responsible for reading labels and hangtags carefully.

Marking regulations made by the textile ministry are to ensure that the declared quality textile is supplied to the consumers. Consumers can also learn from the buying methods and experiences of others. For the last two decades there has been a tremendous and rapid development in product innovation, product line, pricing and promotional strategies by the businessmen and so the preferences, tastes, culture etc of the consumers have manifested the business environment and led to transformation from sellers market to buyers market. Hence, today the effort has been made to make the consumer a king and his buying behaviour has acquired the focal point of attention by the business world the marketing agencies and the middlemen. Consumer behaviour is an indispensable condition upon which all market planning and strategy is predicted. A businessman can help the consumer solve his textile consumption problems only when he understands the buying process and factors influencing it. Discussing about the price, difference is due to difference in quality or other factors, which will help consumers to learn from each other. Knowledge imparted by word of mouth from one consumer to another is a fast method of spreading useful information. Through correct
information, the consumer becomes aware of quality standards and genuineness of prices.

**ii) Advertisement:** Marketing communication is an important tool in the hands of marketers to persuade consumers to act in a desired way to purchase a product. Advertising is a vital marketing as well as a powerful communication tool. It pays to advertise and any publicity is a good publicity. Advertisements help consumer to find their way in the complex market system. The influential effect of advertisements however depends mainly on the way the message is presented to the consumer.

Same way, News items in a daily newspaper or weeklies regarding topics of consumer interest also provide authentic information. Consumer magazines provide information through different articles, related to consumer problems. Thus, it is equally important for advertising firms to provide adequate information. It is important for consumers to use various advertisements as a source of information only, to shift facts and use their own judgment to decide whether to buy or not to buy.

**iii) Government Notification:** From time to time government notifications appear in the official gazette in the form of new laws or amendments made to existing laws. These notifications inform the consumers about the role of government in controlling the various exploitive practices adopted by sellers.

**Product Safety:**

The government through its authorized agencies has set up certain recognizable marks of quality, which a manufacturer can obtain for certifying his products. There are a number of certification marks in use of different products by which consumers can identify goods, which have been tested and passed according to minimum quality standards of acceptability. But there are very few such certification marks available for textile products and processes.

**i) Standardisation in Textiles:** Standards have been set for textile products and processes. In the product category, Standards are set under fiber, yarn and fabrics. As fabric is the end product used by the consumer, its quality is of great importance. Therefore, Bureau of Indian Standards has laid down a number of standards for fabrics made from cotton, silk, wool or jute.

Through standardization, quality control can be maintained. The standard mark on a product conveys the assurance that it has been produced to comply with the
requirements of relevant Indian Standards under a well planned system of inspection, testing and quality evaluation. Standardization marks are of two types.

a) Mandatory Marks, i.e., markings on the cloth as per Textile (Consumer Protection) Regulation, 1988.

b) Obligatory Standard marks, e.g. Wool Mark, which indicates 100% pure wool.

Normally, standard marks are displayed on the face plait of the fabric, such as:

- Wool Mark: Is a certification mark, which appears on a woollen garment of quality. It indicates that wool is pure and the marked garment is not made of other fabric but only of pure wool.
- Sanforization: Is a process, which controls shrinkage in fabrics such as cotton, linen etc. on washing.
- Sanforised: Marked fabrics have a residual shrinkage (not more than 1%) despite repeated washing.
- Sanforised Plus: A fabric with this mark indicates wash and wears performance.
- Sanforised Plus 2: It appears on durable blends.
- Sanforised Set: It shows 100% cotton garments that can be tumble dried.
- Mercerization: It is a process of treating fabrics to give them strength, absorbency and luster.

Protection:

Product safety can be assured to the textile consumer if there is a legally established infrastructure to enforce on producers and manufacturers, the standards laid down for safe products. If there is any doubt one can get the fabric or other textile item tested in any of the authorised laboratories with the help from the office of the Textile Commissioner, Mumbai or its regional offices located in different big cities. The standard marks play an important role in consumer protection. However, its success depends largely on consumer awareness about these marks. The government has enacted many laws for this purpose, and amending them from time to time to protect consumer interest.
Education:

The lack of awareness on the part of consumers and the absence of enlightened consumer organisations to protect their interest have complicated the buying process of consumer. They lack knowledge on how to distinguish between real and deceptive textile goods. The objective of consumer education is to teach people how to seek out, use and evaluate consumer information so that they may improve their ability to purchase or consume products or services, which they think are most likely to enhance their well being. In addition to protective legislation and regulation, consumers require information and education, which may help them to make wise buying decisions. Government policy makers and consumer advocates now recognize that they cannot protect consumers against every possible marketing abuse and that the consumer’s best defence is better and improved product knowledge. Today, many national, state and local agencies offer various consumer educations programme and disseminate information related to various products and services. These programmes are carried out with the hope that these will make consumers better and more aware consumers. The consumer education, if provided properly, will not only make a difference in the awareness level but also help consumer to change his buying behaviour. It will make them alert and cautious buyers. Consumer education is really an important tool to influence buying pattern of consumers. Every one of us is a consumer and therefore has a right to consumer education. But it is the right education that would enable us to act as rational and informed consumer throughout our life.

All the tools are there to help the consumers in making wise purchase decisions. None of these tools can be utilized to full advantage but one can acquire basic knowledge about them by:-

i) Past Experience: It refers to the active use of the product by the consumer. Most of the textile consumers rely their future purchases on their past experience. The particular textile item is purchased by touch and feel of the fabric, the ability developed due to repeated use. For example, an intelligent buyer will easily point out the difference between artificial silk and pure silk.

ii) Inspection: It is the careful looking of the goods in the market to judge as accurately as possible, by appeal it makes to senses their suitability, for the use the buyer has in mind. Many women put the fabric against the light to see the closeness of the weave or to find any defect like holes in the fabric. But
mere inspection fails to give accurate information about the fabric. Testing is necessary to measure durability and performance ability of a product. Women frequently test color fastness of fabrics by wetting the fabrics with water or spit and rubbing it against some light coloured cloth to see whether colour bleeds or not. This is a simple test used at the time of purchase, which gives information about the colourfastness of the fabric.

Services:

Various Government agencies and voluntary organisations are working for providing guidelines to consumers to help them in ensuring safety, quality and prices of various products.

These organisations contribute a lot to the consumer movement by influencing the policies of Government on issues concerning consumer interests and affairs. They also represent consumers in consumer courts for the redressal of their complaints.

There are about 600 organisations working in India for providing various services to the consumers regarding information about various products.

These tools if properly used can go a long way to provide the consumer with handy and easy guide to make a sound purchase decision.

1.12 Areas of Consumer Concern

The Consumer Protection Act has listed the consumer rights; it seeks to protect the consumer in India. Consumers are however, by and large, denied most of these rights. They are exploited by a large number of unfair trade practices. They have become victims of false claims for products blatantly advertised. Business enterprises are making profits through undesirable and unethical means, which is highly detrimental to the consumers. In India the consumer faces a number of serious problems with price, quality or volume of products available in the market. The desire to make big money in a short time with total disregard to the ethics of business and welfare of consumer has become the order of the day. Some of the common fraudulent practices adopted by businessmen in the sale of textiles are listed below:

1.13 Common Fraudulent practices

There are various defects present on the fabric surface, which may occur at different stages of fabric construction such as spinning, weaving and finishing. These
defects make the fabric quality substandard but they are being sold as standard quality products in the market without bringing it to the knowledge of innocent buyers having no knowledge of defects occurring during the process of manufacturing i.e. from spinning to finishing stage. Some of these commonly occurring defects which go unnoticed and undetected by the consumer are:-

i) **Broken filament**: which occurs because of breaking of the filaments while constructing the main yarn.

ii) **Knots**: which appear when broken yarns are pieced together by improper knotting.

iii) **Slub**: this occurs when there is bunch of fibers having less or no twist or having wider diameter as compared to normal spun yarn.

iv) **Double end**: when two ends are woven as one.

v) **Floats**: appear over a certain area of the fabric because of improper interlacement of warp and weft.

vi) **Missing end**: are characterized by a gap parallel to the warp threads and in case of selvedge defect wavy selvedge or improper tension of the selvedge ends is there.

vii) Hanging threads sometimes appear on the face of the fabric, which are termed as loose threads.

viii) **Dye bar** in which a bar in the weft direction appears due to a difference in the colour or shade of the dye.

ix) **Improper prints**: some times printing is not done as per the required design at certain places resulting into misprint which is also against the interest of the buyer.

1.14 Common fraudulent practices at the time of sale of Textile Goods

i) **Incorrect Measures**

It has been a regular practice to measure the length of fabrics on the scale which is printed on the table and accuracy of that may not be always correct. Even if the length of fabric is short consumers have to pay for the full length.

Similarly the quality of many fabrics are determined by their weight per unit length for example silk and crepe fabrics which are sold as 40, 60 and 80 gms. etc.
This again may not be always correct because there is no provision to check the weight at shop. At times more than the recommended weight (metallic salts) finish is applied to improve the inferior quality silk to resemble good quality. Customers who cannot differentiate land up by paying more for poor quality.

ii) Lack of standardised sizes

In India there are as many sizes available for gents shirts, pants/jeans as are the number of manufacturer. Consumer is perplexed and confused as how to choose the right size from the variety of sizes available in the market. At times two pieces of same size of one company also differ in length and width. To add to the misery of the consumer shopkeepers refuse to exchange the product on the ground that one should have tried on the garment and then bought it. Consumer has no choice other than to be satisfied with ill-fitting garment. Another very common practice of shopkeepers is that they do not give Cash Memo for every small purchase of cloth. If the colour of a saree blouse or frock fades, one has no ground to ask for replacement without cash memo.

iii) Lack of safety or unsafe products

One of the main issues in clothing safety for the general public is flame resistance and it refers to the fibre content, construction and finish applied to the fabric. All fabrics’ burn and their ability to burn is a significant cause of a number of accidents. Natural fibres such as cotton and wool are slower to ignite and burn than synthetic fibres. Natural fibres also burn and leave an ash while synthetic fibres burn and melt, thus depositing hot molten material that can do more damage to skins than flames. Open and loose weaves are more likely to burn than tight, close weave. Fabrics with napped fibres and pile fabrics burn more readily than smooth fibres.

Similarly, during rainy season in India which has hot and humid climate, synthetic fabrics are not at all comfortable to wear, but new prints and blends of such synthetic fabrics are made available in the market thus forcing the innocent and ignorant customers to buy them which further leads to various skin problems.

The Flammable Fabrics Act has set forth some standards for rating apparel fabrics, which is to discourage the use of any highly flammable fabrics to make different apparel. But at the time of selling, no shopkeeper makes a special mention of this finish or property of the fabric to the consumer.

Synthetic fibres although have easy to care properties, due to its light weight and durability, but they produce static electricity which affect the skin of the wearer
and sometimes these synthetic fibres and dyes cause serious skin allergy due to carcinogenic effect.

iv) False Labelling

The basic purpose of labelling is to make the consumer aware of the fibre content of any fabric and care required to maintain the fabric quality. But now a day it has been a common practice to give false and loaded information regarding the fibre content, finish applied and its care procedures. For example-terry cot fabric 65:35 could be 80:20 or 70:30 and so on. Similarly copying of brand names, trademarks with slight difference in spellings to resemble the original just to make the innocent consumers confused are blindly adopted.

Very little difference in certification labels can mislead the consumers, for example, wool mark symbol should consist of five arch sides, which can be replaced by less or more than five arch. Slightly different spellings of finishes can also mislead the consumer e.g. *Mercurized* instead of mercerized, *sanferised* instead of sanforised.

Being unaware of the different fabric properties the customers go on wearing fabrics, which can cause serious harm to them and may become hazardous in an accident.

v) Sale Gimmicks

There are various sales promotion techniques being followed by the shopkeepers, retailers and even by the manufacturers, which can easily mislead the consumers. Now a days the common practice to increase the sale is to give free gifts, discount sales, ‘buy one and get one’ or ‘buy one and get one two free’ sort of misleading advertisements. Although the cost of advertisement and free gifts is already added to the original cost of the product, but these things can easily attract the consumers and they are led to impulsive buying.

- Sometimes celebrities are used as brand ambassador to cover the additional cost by certain companies to attract the customer and products are sold at higher rates when actually these are not worth that price.
- Sometimes altogether wrong information is being given in advertisements, which mislead the customers.
1.15 History of Consumer Movement

The importance of consumer and the realization of the need for keeping consumer welfare in mind while formulating business policies is not a new phenomenon. The concept of ‘Consumer Sovereignty’ was propounded in the 18th century by famous economist Adam Smith in his book ‘Wealth of Nations’ where he wrote 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 to the interest of the consumer.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “A customer is the most important visitor in our premises. He is not dependent on us, we are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work; he is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider to our business; he is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him; he is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so.”

Swami Vivekanand also believed in the concept that the ‘Consumer is the King’. A careful analysis of these observations made by Adam Smith and Mahatma Gandhi makes it clear that business is entirely dependent upon the consumer, not only for its survival but also for its growth.

The consumer has assumed greatest significance in any developing or developed country as all economic activities center around him. For the last two decades, there has been a rapid development in product innovation, production line, product pricing and promotional strategies by the business men and so the preferences, tastes, culture etc. of the consumers have changed the business environment and has led to the transformation of sellers market into buyers market.

So consumer is rightly called a king, and he and his buying behaviour has acquired the focal point of attention by the business world and marketing agencies, especially in the contemporary times.

Today, the increasing list of companies and firms trying to attract consumer attention to their varied product is mind-boggling. From word of mouth, through door-to-door marketing and use of attractive expensive advertising techniques, no effort is spared by them to attract the consumer.

Consumer is the most important element in the business, the whole business is run for the benefit of ultimate consumer. He is the purpose and the part of the business and as such he should be the centre of focus of any business. However, in reality this
does not happen. The desire of businessmen to make it big in a short time with total
disregard to the satisfaction of consumer is the order of the day. The weaker bargaining
power of consumer vis-à-vis business leads to consumer exploitation. In India, this
problem is aggravated by the fact that the Indian consumer is characterized by low
literacy, lack of awareness and poverty. This situation has resulted in increased
government intervention and regulation through legislations, to project the interests of
the poor customer. In this way, consumer movement started with the sole purpose of
improving the position of buyer in relation to the manufacturers in the sphere of
production and distribution of goods and services.

Consumer movement includes all the actions taken by the consumer members,
by the government, by consumer associations and by business houses. The United
States is the pioneer in the consumer movement where it started in early 1900 as a
reaction to unsafe and impure products in the form of legislation by the government.
The businessman has to accept the fact that he can survive only if he satisfies the
customer by creating customer value in his products. He should care for not only the
immediate needs of the customer but also for his long term interests. A business unit
must be held accountable for any of its actions that affect people and their environment.
Negative business impact on consumer must be acknowledged and corrected to retain
the customer, only then the business world can survive.

1.16 Consumer Movement

The world in which we live is much more complicated than what we think and
what we know. Self sufficiency has been replaced by complete dependency on the
market. Hence the present day consumers are at the mercy of unscrupulous methods
used by sellers as has been demonstrated in the first section of this chapter. Protection
of their interests and rights is important for the general welfare of the people, which is
the major goal of every modern welfare state. Thus consumer movement is a social and
legal force, which aims at protecting the general interest of the consumers.

1.17 Genesis of consumer movement

The history of consumerism and consumer rights can be traced back to the
middle ages when trade was an unorganized activity. Originally the consumerism
“industry” consisted of a few organizations interested primarily in generating
regulatory legislation. It was convincing in its cause and appeal to the literate consumers, particularly those of the affluent classes, who consume a far greater variety of products and services than the illiterates, and middle-income consumers. But, consumers in 1990s have started reacting in a wide variety of ways to vent their frustrations and to correct what they consider to be injustice.11

Consumer movement is the consequence of the harassment faced by consumers over the years due to the mercenary practices of suppliers at the cost of consumers' health, safety and well being. Philip Kotler defines consumerism as “a social movement seeking to augment the rights and powers of the buyers in relation to sellers”12.

Boyd and Allen state that “although often abused as a term, consumerism may be best defined as the dedication of those activities of both public and private organizations which are designed to protect individuals from practices that impinge upon their rights as consumers”13.

In making the consumer a better buyer and safeguard his interest from the deceitful practices of businessmen, consumer education and awareness is the most effective measure to protect themselves from the clutches of the businessmen. The objective of consumer awareness and education is to help people become more informed and better consumers. One cannot become an effective consumer without becoming fully aware of factual information. An informed consumer can make wise decisions in the purchase of products. Consumers must remember that the best choice for their next-door neighbour may not necessarily be the best for them. Each consumer is an individual with individual wants, needs and desires. He should learn to weigh all the possibilities and make the choice best suited to him as an individual. Consumer awareness will go a long way to help him to discern what, where, when and how to buy. It will teach him to find out the reasons for dissatisfaction with a particular product or service so that he may express his complaints to seek redressal. In fact, this study of consumer education, awareness and protection has come to be known as “Consumerism” or “Consumer Movement”, which is concerned with making consumers more responsible and constructive towards fighting injustices.

Consumer movement is an organised movement of citizens and government to strengthen the rights and powers of buyers in relation to sellers. It is in fact a social movement because the concepts of social responsibility and consumerism go hand in hand of every organization had practiced a high level of social responsibility the
consumer movement might never have begun. But there is a major gap between idealistic business philosophy statements and actual marketing performance as judged by the consumers in the market place.

The aim and objective of consumerism is to create awareness in consumers about their rights. Consumer awareness will definitely increase the collective consciousness among the public and generate confidence in the individual to face different problems in the market. Generation of awareness will also develop conscious attitude in the consumer. It will teach the consumers how to seek out, use and evaluate consumer information to improve their ability to purchase. It will also help consumers to make the best consumption choices for themselves. Consumer movement and consumer awareness is expected to bring about following changes in consumer behaviour.

1. Become more willing and able to express his wants and needs to marketers.
2. Seek out and use more information to help him make comparison of price, quality and service before making a purchase.
3. Develop skills to make intelligent decisions in the purchase of goods and services.
4. Become less likely to purchase products that are potentially harmful to his health.
5. Have knowledge about the basic provisions of various laws enacted for his protection, and seek remedies, redress or restitution more actively when dissatisfied with a product, service or other marketing practices.

We can say that awareness about his rights is the fundamental duty of every citizen and consumer Protection is his fundamental right and a consumer can act as sovereign if he is allowed to enjoy his rights that have been listed in the Consumer Awareness Programme (CAP).

Consumerism, taken as a collective endeavour of the consumers to protect their interests, is a manifestation of the failure of the business and the government to guarantee and ensure the legitimate rights of the consumers.

1.18 Growth of Consumer Movement

"A Consumer movement may be described as the collective power of consumers to take country forward with respect of awareness, education and
development. The direction of such movement, which attempts to improve the quality of living of the people, determines the degree of development in a country. The philosophy of the consumer movement centered mainly around the testing of consumer goods, and evaluating services offered, and acting both as a source and also as a clearing house of information, promoting the formation and development of new consumer organizations, and providing advice, holding of seminars and rendering practical assistance in consumer protection and consumer education activities.\(^\text{14}\)

(quoted by Premavathy Seetharaman and Mohini Sethi in their book, Consumerism strategies and tactics.)

1.18.1 Consumer Movement in the US

The United States is the pioneer in consumer movement because the consumers first began to realize that they had some rights in market. USA was the first country in which the resentment of its people against the malpractices of business was voiced openly in 1930's. In early 20\(^\text{th}\) century, sale of many impure and unsafe goods led to increased legislation to maintain standards of quality. Clayton Act was passed in 1914 to protect consumers from the abuse of large corporations and monopolies\(^\text{15}\). Government increased its control over business, which gave birth to many agencies like Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) National Labour Board etc. to protect the consumers. Inflation of 1970's made consumers all the more sensitive about their rights and their boycott of certain products like coffee, beef and sugar resulted in bringing down the prices of these products. The industrialists tried to defeat consumers’ movement but they could not stop the consumers from fighting for their rights. Many management experts refuted the views of the opposing business community. Peter F. Drucker described consumerism as “the shame of marketing”. The apt coinage of these words emphasize upon the efficacy of righteous marketing.\(^\text{16}\)

He also pointed out that the vigour in the consumer movement was a clear reflection of the failure of business to satisfy the demands of the consumers. The movement was also described as a motivator for competition and driver of higher efficiency at lower costs.

The consumer groups like Consumer Federation of America (CFA) played an important role in developing consumers’ interest in protecting their rights. The CFA
holds annual conferences of consumer experts, farm and labour leaders and government to discuss consumer problems. Consumers have tried to protect themselves by forming various consumer organizations. Among them, the American Association of University Women, the National League of Women Votes and Business and Professional Women's Club is prominent. The most important body in U.S. to protect the consumer is Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). It was established in 1972 to protect consumers from unsafe products. This commission promotes the development of voluntary safety standards by manufacturers. It establishes and enforces uniform standards for the content, production and performance of consumer products. The products, which are unsafe and hazardous, are called back by the commission. It can seize dangerous products or stop their sale.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is established to get affirmative disclosures from the advertisers in their advertisements. It has the power to require a company to disclose in its advertisement some of the deficiencies or limitations of its product or service so that the consumer can judge its negative as well as positive features. How warmly a salesman endears himself to us by pointing out that a certain item is defective and offer another for our perusal! The purpose of this substantiation is to help consumers make a more reasoned choice. Ralph Nader and his group also helped in increasing consumer interest in the safety of various products. President John F. Kennedy in his first consumer message to the Congress in 1962 gave four consumer rights - The Right to Safety, the Right to be informed, the Right to choose and the Right to be heard. (quoted by G.C. Jaswal, unpublished thesis, 1998)

1.18.2 Growth of Consumer Movement in Europe

Europe also faced the problem of exploitation by the self motivated manufacturers and sellers. Government recognized that a strong consumer protection policy should be developed and maintained. However, consumer movement took proper shape in Britain after Second World War. In fact in Britain consumer testing is exclusively done by privately operated consumer associations. A research institute was established in 1869 through various grants, which conducted investigations into government, professional, and other commercial services. There is a consumer Advice Centre in London. The Board of Trade is there to regulate the consumer goods and services. Safety aspects of consumer protection are handled by the Home office.
Ministry of Health enforces the Food and Drugs Act. In 1935, a formal “Consumer Union” came into existence in Britain. It built a laboratory for regular testing of products and published consumer reports on the test results and enlightened the public about misleading claims.

Consumer movement flourished in Norway in 1939 with the establishment of ‘Forbrukerr Adet’ - a consumer organization with substantial governmental grant. This is operated by representatives of seven leading national organisations and it handles all complaints and publishes a monthly consumer magazine. To inculcate the growth of quality marks, an institute of informative labelling has also been established.

There was a consumer revolution in Denmark from 1947 to 1957. A government operated Advice Centre and a Consumer testing organization look after the consumer activities. The main purpose of this organization is to view available brands and receive impartial guidance. Belgium has two competing consumer groups and West Germany has two central organizations both undertaking consumer testing. Press campaign in favour of consumers in these countries plays a significant role in the development of consumer movement.

1.18.3 Consumer Movement in Asia

In New Zealand and Australia a great development in consumer protection has taken place in mid 50’s. In New Zealand the influence of the consumer movement is reflected not only in legislation but also in the organization of consumers. In 1959, a consumer’s council was established under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. A consumer institute was also added to the council in 1966. This consumer institute receives heavy government subsidy. But in Australia, this movement is independent in character and receives no subsidy from the government. Local consumer movement exists in leading Australian cities.

Consumer movement became popular in other countries viz. South Africa, Austria, Philippines, Korea, Yugoslavia, Malaysia, Spain, etc., in 1960s.

Asia, Japan and Sweden are the leaders in adopting consumer concerns as a part of their government policy. In Japan, the Consumer Protection Fundamental Act was enacted in 1968 in which the basic framework of consumer policy was set out. Japan Consumer Association and Japan Consumer Union are actively involved in the field of testing for product quality. Various private cooperatives are organized to prevent short
weights, adulteration and other malpractices. Japan has demonstrated how consumer revolution can take place along with the rapid economic development and the emerging of mass consumption society.

1.18.4 Development of Consumer Movement in India

Though the Indian consumer has been a conveniently forgotten factor since long, consumer movement in India has gained momentum only in recent past. It was only in the second half of the 20th century that this awareness started emerging despite the fact that people have been consumers since time immemorial. The reason for the consumer awakening in India can be attributed to the acute shortages, shoddy goods, manipulative prices and near total immunity of traders and manufacturers against such malpractices. The focus on consumers gained in importance only after dissatisfied consumers started reacting and voicing their grievances against unscrupulous traders and manufacturers of goods and providers of services.

The consumers in India are by and large poor, illiterate and ignorant. Awareness necessary for self protection is lacking among them. The products have grown in form and complexity. Their complex nature demands full information for making a wise choice, which the consumer does not have and therefore he can not make a prudent decision. Independent and essential information thus becomes very necessary. Media plays a vital role in providing information to prospective buyers. The problem, however, is that the media can be manipulated by the marketers. Advertising being a paid form of mass communication is obviously dictated by the whims and fancies of the advertiser. In India, where a large percentage of population live below poverty line, the plight of consumers who are exploited due to poor quality of goods and services and high price can well be imagined.

The first formal consumer movement was started in 1949 by a Gandhian in Madras. The consumer movement in India started gaining momentum with the setting up of National Consumer Protection Council in Madras in 1956 under the patronage of Shri C. Rajgopalachari. Its major functions include the collection of information regarding consumer problems, assist the state government in the consumer movement, examine consumer grievances and initiate remedial measures. Many other voluntary organizations came into being in the later part of 20th century with the purpose of
educating and protecting consumers”18. (quoted by Gurbax Singh in law of Consumer protection, 1993).

A major achievement of the organisation has been to secure amendment by the government to make commodity sales more transparent. As a consequence of this representation now the price, inclusive of all local taxes is being printed on the packages all over India. This organization brings out a bimonthly magazine named “Common Cause” containing consumer related articles”19.

Voluntary Organization for Information and Consumer Education (VOICE) was another organisation founded by teachers and students of Delhi University and is doing excellent work in the field of consumer protection. It took up a number of important consumer issues with Supreme Court. It compelled the Soft Drinks companies to add in their advertisement that their drinks are artificially flavored and contain no fruit juice.

‘Common cause’ is another society which operates at all India level and is engaged in taking up public causes for seeking redress for problems of the general public. A large number of individual problems of aggrieved citizens are also being referred to it, which then refers these details to the head office of the concerned organisation in Goa.

The Indian Consumers’ Union, ‘Premavathy’ was registered in New Delhi in 1977 with the main aim of fighting against the exorbitantly rising prices of essential commodities. There are over 700 voluntary organizations working for consumer protection in India. Indian Federation of Consumer Organization, New Delhi was founded in 1978 with the object of bringing together all voluntary consumer associations in India. It provides a forum for discussion of all consumer problems. This organization has helped a lot in encouraging consumer movement in the country. It maintains regular contact with government and other autonomous bodies and international organizations and conducts regular seminars, exhibitions and other consumer protection programmes20.

‘Consumer Guidance Society of India’ (CGSI) Bombay has been established with the objective of protecting and promoting the rights and interest of consumers and provide them proper information and counseling. It takes up their complaints with the offending party and helps them select goods and services, which offer a fair return for the money they spend. It also brings out a master magazine “Keemat” which contains
very useful articles of consumer interest. Consumer Guidance Society of India is the only associate member of IOCU from India.

In 1979, the Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC) was formed in Ahmedabad. It is a non-political and non-profit making voluntary organization developed only to protect consumer interests and is rightly recognized as a research institute by the central government on the recommendation of the Department of Science and Technology.

It has its own testing centre with latest facilities for testing consumer products. It has conducted comparative testing of different brands of Ampicillin. It has a very well stocked library in the field of consumer education.

There are many other voluntary consumer organisations like Consumer Coordination Council (CCC), Consumer Forum, CUTS Calcutta and IICS Bangalore etc., which play an active role in creating awareness among the consumers. Besides conducting workshops and seminars for educating consumers, they also conduct tests on consumer products and provide relevant information on different brands available in the market. Magazines published by these organizations provide a useful guidance to the consumer to enable them to take wise decisions while making their purchases.

1.19 Role of Industrial Associations

Industrial Associations like Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Advertisement Standard Council of India (ASCI) are making great efforts to create awareness among the corporate sector on product quality and customer care. Some of the industrial units have followed "Direct Selling to the Consumer, thereby having a direct contact with the consumers and their problems. This practice has also eliminated the profit share of middlemen, thereby reducing the ultimate price to be charged from the consumer.

'Amartex' is such a textile unit in Chandigarh, which offers direct sale to the consumers through its various outlets. Consumers here in Chandigarh are getting a great benefit of this direct selling by "Amartex", because they get quality textile and readymade garments at a price less than that which is prevalent in the market because of seller's saving on advertisement expenditure and commission to intermediaries.

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Direct sales by factory outlets facilitate a better customer care. It also brings cheaper goods to people as profit margin of the middle level agent, the retailer is eliminated.

The Confederation of Indian Food Trade and Industry (CIFTI) has drawn up a Code of Ethics for its member units aimed at quality products.

ASCII acts as a custodian of ethics in advertising. It has made its impact as an agency, which is willing to monitor and regulate the type, content and quality of advertisements.

1.20 Government Regulations and Consumers Movement

Government of India has passed various laws to protect consumers and safeguard their interest. These laws have proved a boon to the consumers. Our government has been very active in enacting various consumer friendly laws. The Essential Commodities Act of 1955 and The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act of 1954 govern the production and supply of all notified essential commodities and ensure that the consumer gets unadulterated food articles and timely supply of essential commodities. The Essential Commodities Act provide for the detention of a person who is acting in a manner, which might be prejudicial to maintenance of supplies of Essential Commodities.

To safeguard consumer interests against unfair trade practices like short weighing, misleading information on packed goods, The Standards of Weights and Measures Act was passed in 1976. This Act provides protection to consumers against under-weighing and short measurement. Then there is Trade and Merchandising Marks Act of 1958, which provides for registration and better protection of trade marks. Then there are Acts governing Environment Protection. These are; The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Environment Protection Act, 1986. These Acts provide for prevention, control and abetment of pollution.

The Government of India has promulgated a number of Acts to protect consumers interest but the most comprehensive and most progressive law for consumer protection was enacted in 1986 under the name “The Consumer Protection Act”, 1986. The main purpose of this Act is to provide for better protection to consumers through simple, speedy and inexpensive procedure. This act provides for the establishment of redressal agencies at the District, State and Central levels for the speedy redressal of consumers complaints and grievances.
Enactment of CPA is a milestone in the history of consumer movement in India

1.21 Role of International Organisations in the Growth of Consumer Movement: Role of Consumer International

Growth of consumer movement is not confined to India alone. It is a global phenomenon, which is evident from the fact that many international organisations are set up for pushing up this movement. The most important is Consumers International (CI) formerly known as International Organisation of Consumer Union (IOCU).

Consumers International was formed with the name of International organization of consumer union in 1960 in Hague by Consumer groups of United States, Britain, Australia, Belgium and Netherlands with a view to promote world wide cooperation in consumer information, education and comparative testing of goods and services. It has sought justice for consumers on a world-wide basis. With the expansion in its activities, the organisational name of IOCU was changed to Consumers International (CI) in 1985 with its head office in London. Its main function is to raise issues of consumer interests. Today, Consumers International has over 200 members representing 80 countries. It stimulates interchange of techniques, educational material, and test results among its member countries. It has also established a technical committee to represent consumers. CI makes efforts to pool and share resources from and between a numbers of countries for its activities of consumer interest all over the world. As a part of its global contribution, it holds a World Congress every three years in different member countries and at that congress global consumer issues are debated. One of the major achievements of CI has been its successful campaign for adopting the UN 1985 Guidelines for consumer Protection.

1.22 Impact of UN Guidelines on Global Consumer Protection

In this age of globalisation, consumer protection has not only national but international ramifications. Therefore, there is greater need for International Cooperation in the field of consumer protection. The United Nations in its Guidelines adopted in 1985 has also laid greater emphasis on international cooperation in this field. In the form of these guidelines on consumer protection, the UN set global norms for governments to protect their citizens as consumers, set some targets for businesses in their dealings with consumers and finally encouraged consumer groups to take active
part in the consumer protection task. (quoted by Rajan Saxena, Marketing Management, 1992)

The Guidelines the following:

1. Physical Safety
2. Promotion and Protection of Consumer Interest
3. Standards for the safety and quality of Consumer goods and services
4. Distribution facilities for essential consumer goods and services.
5. Measures enabling consumers to obtain redressed
6. Education and information programmes, and
7. Measures relating to specific areas like food, water and pharmaceuticals.

The United Nations Secretary General has rightly expressed that international cooperation with regard to consumer protection is needed because the development of a consumer protection policy no longer requires that measures be taken only at the national level. Since the world economy has become interdependent, national consumers policies now have acquired international dimensions. Problems and fraudulent practices faced by consumers are not exclusive to only one country. As a result, measures adopted to protect the consumers in one country can have implications for consumers in other countries. So the role of international consumer protection organisations have become imperative for consumer protection.

1.23 Consumer Behaviour for Purchase of Textiles

Consumer behaviour refers to the act of consuming goods or services. It is the process of decision making and physical activity an individual adopts in allocating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services. In the words of Glenn Witters, “Human behaviour refers to the total process by which individuals interact with their environment.” Consumer behaviour is the process by which individuals decide whether, what, when, where, how and from whom to purchase goods and services. Buying behaviour is assuming great significance day by day in the marketing process, whether it is a consumer good or an industrial commodity. Marketing is the process of defining, anticipating and creating customer needs and of organizing all the resources of the company to satisfy them. Satisfaction of consumers’ needs in fact provides the rationale for a firm’s existence.
Knowledge of consumer behaviour is vital for efficient execution of a firm’s advertising and sales promotion policies. In fact, marketing starts with the consumers and ends also with the consumers. Marketing firms use their knowledge of consumer behaviour to segment markets, to design marketing strategies and to measure marketing performance. The salesmen employed by sellers record the small talk that they have with the consumers. This reveal the ‘mind’ of the consumer before a purchase is finalized. This small talk reveals, in case of textiles, the choice of the colour, texture, quality, price and any other factors weighing with the consumer before he decides on the purchase. But all these aspects are determined by his social economic and cultural background, therefore, the study of consumer behaviour in marketing of textiles assumes a greater significance in the marketing process.

Marketing experts believe that consumer behaviour while taking a decision on the purchases to be made depends more on emotional antecedents than on rational antecedents, i.e. consumer behaviour is more emotional than professional in his purchasing power.

1.24 Role of Awareness Education in The Purchase Behaviour of Textile Consumers

In a normal household budget food, clothing and shelter are major terms of expenditure. The importance of textiles comes next only to food. It therefore explains as to why the market has been flooded with wide variety of textiles so as to meet the increasing need. Quite a lot of research, planning and costing is done for the development of textile industry. Unfortunately, almost nothing, in terms of consumer’s satisfaction of quality, price and other related parameters, is carried out. A textile consumer is left to manufacturer’s mercy who tends to exploit him on quality or advertising a fake inferior quality fabric. This is only because of lack of awareness of products and services, consumer being unaware of his right. It is yet another important loop hole to be taken care of.

The world in which we live today stands in sharp contrast to the good old days when the consumer had few and simple needs, with liberalization policy and technology having invaded almost every aspect of our lives, there is an imperative need for consumer awareness in the purchase of textile goods.
India today is one of the top textile manufacturers in the world having a large variety of products including natural fabrics, mixed fabrics, manmade fabrics with different textures. A large variety of textiles is found in large number of retail shops dealing in textiles in all cities and towns. Since clothing is one of the basic needs of life for all and people have diversity of dress habits, our markets produce innumerable varieties of clothing to be consumed by over one billion people. In modern market scenario where liberalization and competitiveness among producers have made their survival tough, they have resorted to unfair practices to make unsavoury profits in the short span of time. Buyers have become a victim to these deceitful practices due to their ignorance. This is the case in all textile items including garments, bed sheets, pillow covers, curtains et al.

The common malpractices adopted by textiles dealers are short measurement, fake stamping or misleading advertisement. For example, a plain cloth manufacturer puts the stamp of “two by two” on the fabric, which does not have the relevant strength. This false stamping is done to convey superior quality of the fabric than it actually is. A consumer who purchased terry cotton corduroy pant length, fabric of which claimed to consists of 48% polyester and 52% cotton. After testing it was found that there was just 28.3% polyester and 71% cotton. A consumer can protect himself from these malpractices by becoming alert. He must look for the ISI certification mark which are stamped on the fabrics under the order of the bureau of Indian Standard in woolen garments, he must check the stamp of ‘Wool mark’ to check the purity of wool used. Whenever a consumer goes to buy some textile product, he must keep in mind the following two suggestions to protect himself against unfair trade practices.

i) He should buy preferably from manufacturers’ showrooms or supermarkets.

ii) He should be vigilant and should not allow the cloth to be stretched at the time of measurement.

Rapid development in technology and research has ushered in a new era of innovation and markets are flooded with new verities of fibers and fabrics. Majority of consumers are unable to guide themselves in choosing textiles based on knowledge relevant to that textile product. In the area of textile goods, consumers suffer from low level of awareness lack of information on products, how to confront intelligently, and frequent fraudulent practices in quality, price and measurement methods. With market
adopting the strategy “think globally and act locally” and with the whole world being
looked at as a global market, the consumer needs to be better informed and
communicative. This education and awareness, if provided properly, will prepare
consumer to use it to improve his ability to purchase products.

Today, textile products are available in domestic as well as in international
brand names. International brands adheres to quality norms for consumer satisfaction
better than the domestic brands. In recent times, domestic market also is showing
indication towards alert consumers demands in textile goods. There is a need to orient
the minds of the consumers of textile goods and services so that they may wake up
from being tolerant to demeaning information for better product quality assurance.
There is need for consumer education programmes to generate better awareness, change
buying behaviour practices and make him an alert cautious and informed buyer. The
successful implementation of such programmes requires a collective effort by the
government agencies, consumer organizations and academic institutions.

Consumers should remember that in this age of consumerism ‘Information is
power’, best defence is better product knowledge; but tolerance is compromise on
quality. It was in the background that the present study was conceptualized.

1.25 Rationale of the Study

The inception of textile regulation 1988 (Consumer Protections Act) lays stress
on making a consumer aware of textiles, its qualitative improvement and importance of
markings printed on textiles to benefit the ultimate consumer. It is sad to note that
though a lot of effort has been made by the government, private organizations and
consumer forums at different levels, but textile consumers have not made much
progress in being aware in this regard. It was in this background that the present study
was conceptualized. Most consumers in this context, in particular consumers of textiles
are neither aware of their rights nor are very well informed about the raw material in
the context of the products they buy. I also observed over the years, that this apathy is
mainly due to ignorance and at times due to deliberate indifference. Textiles, it is
believed, that as a consumer product do not impart any thing substantial to the human
body, and the way edibles do. Those of us, dealing with textiles, and its constituents,
are far too familiar with the harm that chemicals and synthetic dues and fibres used in
various textiles products, can cause to the body. The patterns of blending followed by
textile manufacturers are all matter of concerned for authorities in textile regulations. In order to bring down the cost of the product and to enhance their profits, blended fabrics are mixed in the proportion that is not claimed while marketing the product. The frequency at which an average consumer of textiles in India is duped is a matter of concern for everybody.

When I started exploring literature for some fact-finding I was surprised to see that there were very few systematic research on the subject and studies that examined consumer behaviour. Specific studies with regard to textiles redressal were very few. It was with this intent to augment scientific understanding of consumer behaviour with regard to purchase of clothing and textiles that this study is designed. These factors further made it imperative to prove various research questions.

The present study is on “Consumer Behavior towards the Redressal of their grievances in the purchase of Textile Products “based in Chandigarh where literacy, socio-economic profile and presumably, level of awareness of consumer rights is considered very high, while it is low in reality.

1.26 Objectives of the Study
1. To study the factors influencing buying practices of consumers.
2. To study the purchase behaviour of consumers as related to their income and education level.
3. To find out the extent of consumer awareness about protection laws and redressal mechanism.
4. To study the retailers’ selling pattern.
5. To map the awareness and attitudes of retailers towards redressal of consumer complaints.
6. To make efforts to improve the skills of textile consumer in their:-
   ➢ Purchasing habits and
   ➢ Obtaining fair deals from the available redressal mechanisms.

1.27 Hypothesis
A review of research studies reveals that certain important points, which help a consumer to decide in favour of textile products, have been earlier taken up in the
following research studies. Based on cited literature hypothesis have been framed under following foreheads:-

1.27.1 Factors influencing buying practices of textile products

A review of literature emphasise certain important points which help a consumer to decide in favour of the purchase of a textile product such as:-
Consumer education courses for adults and high school students (Marilyn Magy, 1976);
Role of advertisements (Surendra Gupta, 1988); Markings on textiles (Manju Goel, 1989);
Exploitation regarding price information printed on the labels (V.V. Gopal Krishna, 1989);
Survey of market before purchase awareness regarding stamped markings and labels, taking cash memo etc. (Navneet Kaur, 2001).

The above research studies have inspired and helped me to frame the following hypothesis. Income and education has been kept as important variables for the hypothesis.

\[ H_1 \quad \text{Tendency of consumers to survey the market and their preference for specific type of products, would depend on the income and education.} \]

\[ H_2 \quad \text{Knowledge of brand information and labels would differ significantly on the basis of their income and education.} \]

1.27.2 Consumer awareness about redressal mechanism

After food, textiles is the main expenditure, which every household has to bear. Purchasers are to select from a vast variety of fabrics and readymades, both branded and unbranded. Most of the time, consumers are led by sweet talk of salesmen or attractive advertisements, visual and print media, fashion trends and ramp shows. All this contributes in a way to making wrong selection of textile products. Efforts have been made by Government agencies and consumer forums to protect the ignorant consumers by providing redressal to those who complain. Awareness of consumers about the redressal mechanism needs to be studied.

Various studies done on consumer awareness have highlighted the importance of consumerism. The need for consumer organization was felt by D.A.R. Subramanyam (1982), factors for slow growth of consumerism by Ragbir Singh (1989), Consumer protection by Joyotee Gupta (1987), C.K. Sharma (1992) and K. Singh (1992), They all
pinpointed the extreme lack of consumer awareness prevailing in India. Some of the main factors responsible for not seeking the help of redressal mechanism were paucity of time, energy or indignation of consumers. Navneet (2001) examined on consumer awareness regarding consumer forum. N. Thanulingam (1989) has indicated in his research that none of the consumers had membership in the consumer protection councils. Therefore, the need of the hour is to promote educational programmes through media, newspapers, workshops and melas.

Thus it is hypothesized:-

\[ H_1 \] Awareness about consumer protection laws and redressal mechanism would differ significantly on the basis of income and education.

\[ H_2 \] Consumers’ approach for redressal in case of dissatisfaction related to textile products after sale will differ significantly on the basis of income and education.

\[ H_3 \] Consumers approach regarding pursuance of the redressal and seeking compensation, would differ on the basis of income and education.

1.27.3 Knowledge and attitude of retailers towards consumers’ complaints and compensation

Studies on retailers suggest that their attitude was vindicated (N.P. Srivastava et. al (1990)), fraudulent practices were carried on by sellers, J.P. Zend and D. Murali (1994). A report containing the proceedings of the workshop on “Consumers in the Global Age” (1997) stated that consumers of textile are left on manufactures’ and retailers’ apathy. A study by Gagandeep Kaur (2001) concluded that shopkeepers organise reduction sales mainly to clear out the old stocks, which become outdated for the next season. Consumers’ complaints were ignored or postponed. However, it varied from individual to individual. All this led the researcher to frame the following hypothesis towards retailers attitude and consumers’ complaints.

\[ H_1 \] Attitude of retailers towards consumers’ complaints and their handling such situations, would differ with the type of shop and sector where they have their outlets.

\[ H_2 \] Retailers would differ in their views about abiding by consumer protection laws and giving compensation to consumers.
1.27.4 Government Regulatory Measures for Consumers awareness

Government act as a custodian of public. Nabuaki et. al. (1984) showed in his study, the pressure on government to provide remedies on social issues, such as product quality, truthful advertising and pollution clean up. Legislative protection for home markets was reported by S.A. Wasu (1988). The problem is that a vast majority of the consumer are not aware of the existence of various acts framed for the consumers for their welfare. However, it was also pointed out in a workshop on “Consumers in the Global Age” (1997) that consumers cannot be protected against every possible market abuse and hence the best defence was the better product knowledge.

Some questions were framed on governmental measures to protect the consumers of textiles based on the following hypothesis.

\[ H_1 \] Consumers views would differ significantly in their opinion on provisions of protection against sellers on the basis of their income and education.

The text of the present thesis examines this hypothesis with the help of primary data collected from a selected sample in the city of Chandigarh. The observations, results and conclusions that emerged through the primary data are debated in the light of information available through secondary sources.

At the outset, I would like to submit that in the absence of well documented, systematic and scientific studies in the field of grievance management with regard to textiles, this study can at best be described as an exploratory study. It attempts to delineate various factors that are instrumental in determining the response that consumer behaviour entails.

1.28 Limitations of the study

1. This study is limited to two sectors in each of different selected wards of Chandigarh and four villages in the periphery of Union Territory of Chandigarh.

2. It is limited to consumers who are above eighteen years of age who go to the market to make textile purchases for themselves or for the other members of the family.

3. Retailers survey was limited to the shops in the sampled markets of ten sectors, which were identified from the information given by the respondents where
they frequently visited to purchase their textile products in Chandigarh. These sectors which have more number of textile shops, both for yardage and readymades. The criteria for sampling was based on the number of textile shops each sampled sector market has.

The present study is made to assess the redressal behaviour of consumers and to see how well the retailers co-operate in solving the problems of consumers in relation to their buying practices of textiles. Lack of awareness among consumers for getting redressal of their problems have been the main limitation of the study as this created problems in collecting quantitative data pertaining to various redressal of consumers problems. As there is no open access to the records of various consumer organizations and courts, most of the information gathered here is on the basis of the questionnaire or questionnaire cum interview schedule and it has been taken to be authentic information.

Though every effort has been made through persuasion, repeated visits to various shops and personal contacts to collect useful material, but the shopkeepers and the salesmen were reluctant participants. They were apprehensive of some sort of repercussion. It is probable that the results of the study may reflect a consumer centric perception. Given the focus of the study and reluctance of shopkeepers and salesmen to participate openly and honestly in the research survey, it may be contended that the study is as representative and as objective as was possible under the circumstances.

References:

7 Textiles Committee (2002), A catalogue on Woven fabric defects and visual inspection systems. p.33.
8 Patty Brown and Janett Rice (1998), Ready to wear Apparel analysis; p. 78.
15 Directory of voluntary consumer organizations: Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Ahmedabad. 1998.