CHAPTER – VII

STRATEGIC MEASURES FOR PROMOTING AWARENESS OF CONSUMER ISSUES AND RIGHTS AMONG WOMEN

"To awaken the People, it is women who must be awakened! Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves"

- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

In America, the consumers are respected for the reason that the purchased goods can be returned at anytime if the consumer is not satisfied. But the consumers in our country who are insulted and irritated in many ways expect the American ideal situation to exist in our state also. Though women are good decision-makers of the family, still there is need to educate the women regarding the purchase behaviour. It is necessary for the women to improve their behaviour regarding family expenditure. Though consumer behaviour is a general aspect, this study is confined to the women’s point of view, without women the home is like a hostel. So she is the one who plans all the activities of the family. To safeguard the women purchasing the adulterated, it is very essential to create awareness among women consumers. They must know the consumers’ rights and consumer production measures etc., Hence in this research, it is decided to recommend the following criteria to the women consumers in general and in the study area in particular.
7.1. Alternative Arrangements in the Fair Price Shops

In order to improve the functioning of Ration Shop and make the Public Distribution System more effective, there should be an alternative arrangement in the Fair Price Shops as suggested below;

The Fair Price Shops may be transferred to the Mahalir Mantrams (kfsph; kd;wk;) or self help Group(Ra cjtp FOf;fs;) as in Villupuram (Asur village, Chennai). In this area too, village women are maintaining all the activities by themselves. Always the shops are kept open. At any time one may get the items. All misleading activities may be removed by appointing the women in the Fair Price Shop. Because the women are patient and sincere in their work.

7.2. Distribution of Family Expenses

High number of 82 Women consumers among 240 women consumers have no saving in those three municipalities, so a better planning of expenses which can give high level of savings which is necessary among the women consumers. So Women consumers are recommended to plan their monthly family expenses as follows:

a. To have a one year deposit starting from the month of October of January – in order to meet out the expenses during the festival time.

b. Bonus, increment, arrears (of their partner’s income), in the case of employed ones, must be saved.

c. Try to avoid loan facilities; except in necessary conditions depending upon their repaying capacity.
d. Purchase the luxury items, by using guarantee card and to obtain proper receipt / bill for the purchase made without fail.

e. As there is an indirect loss to avoid purchasing electronic items through exchange offers.

f. Obtain full information before purchasing any product and not to hesitate to bargain on MRP rate.

7.3. Training Programmes

In the study area only a meager number of women consumer are aware of ISI, Agmark and Trademark. So the Special Training Programmes for the women are needed. In the Study area; programmes on consumers’ rights, consumer awareness, consumer protection, adulteration, the purpose of District Consumer Court, the person to contact if they are affected by buying defective items about BSI and Trademark, etc.

7.4. Through NSS Camps at School Level & College Level

The consumers are being exploited either by the producer or by the services or by the distributor. The consumers are influenced by aggressive and attractive advertisement, soaring words, bright promise and fancy packages. So to overcome this exploitation the following methods are to be adopted;

1. A curriculum course on “Consumerism” may be introduced either at the school level or / and at the college levels.

2. An apt method to take this message even to the remote places in the district is by folk media i.e., conducting street play(drama), music cum dance
programme, and folk dance called ‘therukoothu’ in Vernacular language, by the NSS volunteers in the special camps.

7.5. Role of Mass Media

7.5.1. Television

The Television is the latest medium of Mass Communication. People may get very authentic information with help of Television. The Consumer can get the message at home when they are relaxed and receptive. The Television becomes a part and parcel of day-today life. So this is the only method to create awareness among the consumers through the mass media in this study area.

Frequently SUN TV is telecasting awareness programmes for the consumers about adulterated items, tips for how to escape from purchasing of adulterated items, importance of consumer redress forum etc. Like SUN TV all the private channels must telecast a programme for the consumer mainly to make the consumers alert. So far SUN TV telecast the effective functioning of consumer Redressal Counsil, Adulteration in Oil, fast food and chocolates. Other TV channels also follow this method. Consumer Organizer of Chennai advised the public not to buy edible oil in terms of buying 100ml or 200ml packets in local petty shops.

Doordharshan Television is rendering valuable services to viewers through the programme namely “Grahangth Dost” between 1.00 pm to 1.30 pm during
week days. The theme of the programme is related to consumers’ problems and other related issues. A similar programme may be organized in Tamil for the benefit of the women consumers in Tamilnadu who watch Television.

7.5.2. Exclusive Women Magazines

Women magazines at least may publish article on their experiences, problems about consumer awareness, Penmani (You are a Woman), Mangayar Malar (Women’s Magazines) Penne Nee (Natpu vattam) (friendship forum) may create some solutions adequately for the consumer problems.

7.6. Identifying Hall Marking Scheme

Generally seal with Hall Mark gold denotes a good quality. Its five features as specified by the Government of India, Bureau of Indian Standards, can identify it. 1. BIS Seal 2. Finess Number 3. Seal of Hall Mark 4. Year of manufacture 5. Name of Jeweler Mart. Purchasing of this type of gold ornaments is advisable as per government rule.

Like Family Planning Programme (▼), a symbol is to be created by the government to familiarize the term consumer Rights.
Certificate courses may be conducted by the Universities for the students, to make aware of problem relating to consumerism. With this Knowledge or skill they may seek employment or they can open a (Consumer Redressal Centre) centre by themselves to provide service to the society.

7.7. Consumers’ Self Help Access

It is very urgent to create a Self Help Access to help the consumers. For this government must take steps as early as possible to product the interest of the consumers from all the problems. The government may also take steps to establish “Consumer Court” for each municipality in the district. Now there is only one “District Consumer Court” in a District. If a consumer court is established in each one of the municipalities, there may be more accessibility to the public in their respective locality itself.

Steps may also be taken by the government to establish a “Women Consumer Court” in each municipality similar to women police station consisting of only women members drawn from the District Forum, the public distribution
system, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) that can be ultimately solve the women’s problems.

The government may take necessary steps to prohibit the misleading advertisements through a Censor Board. That must also consist of a member from a leading familiar section of society as well as leading academician in the locality and members from the district forum, State Commission and National Commission. “Better Teach How to Fish than Giving Some Fish”.

The District Lion’s Club members may also take step for solving the consumer problems. They may arrange campaigns, seminars and workshops in this regard, periodically. Alterneness among the consumers may be created in Tamilnadu especially in rural area, which is possible, only by government along with the cooperation of the public. Rights of the consumers should be recognized and respected in India as in developed countries.

Today not only the innocent consumers are exploited, but also the “educated, informative consumers” are subject to exploitation in the modern market. A permanent solution to this is that the consumers must have awareness about the adulterated goods. Sellers also must be honest while selling goods. All the more the consumers themselves might take steps to safeguard their interest.