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## **An Assessment of Consumer Awareness and protection**

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#### **Abstract**

*The consumers are the foundation for economic building, responsible for transformation of resources into productive things. There is a need for creating the awareness, and to motivate the consumers concerning quality products. Higher the consumer awareness creates lower exploitation in the society. The consumer must be aware of his rights and duties the consumer should be vigilant with a discerning eye to enable to protect him from any malpractice on the part of the traders. To understand the level of the consumer awareness amongst the citizens of Mahabubnagar District of Telangana. The researcher has selected the related title to enlighten of their rights and legal measures assumes importance in the light of safeguarding the interest of the consumer and that forms as the problem of the study. Hence, the research finds the initiative to study the consumer awareness among the public in a backward district like Mahabubnagar. The study is intended with the objectives to assess the consumer awareness amongst people regarding the Rights, to study the awareness of consumer Responsibilities & Protection measures. The sample size under this study is 50 respondents. The questionnaire used to collect data from the consumer respondents by approaching directly. The study is descriptive in nature. The required data for the study collected from the primary and secondary sources. The primary data collected from the sample subjects, Mahabubnagar, as it is convenient to the researchers. Simple descriptive statistical tools like averages, percentages and ratios applied to analyse the data for drawing the conclusions.*

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**1. Introduction:** Any person who buys goods and services for personal consumption and not for commercial purpose or for resale is consumer. Every consumer consumes different commodities and services from our birth to death. All business activity revolves around the consumer. Consumers are the origin of the modern marketing world, every marketing activity revolves around the consumer and the consumer is an originator of an organization consumers are the main pillars of the economic development in any economy. The consumers are the foundation for economic building & responsible for transformation of resources into productive things. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi "A Consumer is the most important visitor on our premises, he is not dependent on us. We dependent on him, he makes favour to us, not we favour on him". Today's consumer said to be king of the modern market. Nevertheless, in reality both public as well as private sector treat consumer very badly. The consumer is cheated in different ways by middlemen, the forms of exploitation may be like adulteration, under-weight of goods, selling goods of inferior quality & duplicated goods, charging higher prices, misleading advertisement in the media etc., the consumer is not sure of getting qualitative goods manufactured & preserved in hygienic condition and at competitive prices.

The need for consumer protection arises because of the exploitation of consumer and the denial of consumer rights in the absence of protective measures. Therefore, there is a need for creating the awareness, and to motivate the consumers concerning quality products. Higher the consumer awareness creates lower exploitation in the society. The consumer awareness defined as clearly, understanding the need and priority of purchasing, conditions and warranties of purchase agreement, proper usage of products and services, details of compensation in case of defaults and rights and duties of consumers, and becoming a prudent consumer. Consumer must be aware of his rights and duties the consumer should be vigilant with a discerning eye to enable to protect him from any malpractice on the part of the traders. Responsibility is to check product expiry date, price, and quality, weight etc.

**2. Review of Literature:** Chaco and Tripathy (2006) concluded in their study that all customers are aware of adulteration and various adulterants found in food even though they are aware of adulteration 33% of the consumers happened to buy adulterated food. Further, found that in spite of consumers being aware of existing problems of adulteration they hardly seek any opportunity to fight against it. Khanna (2008) focuses on vital aspects of medical negligence and realized that the accountant based mostly predicated relies on negligence-based remedy that has to be initially determined. Therefore, as try to do this, one need to visit the law of torts. Thanulingon and gnanadesign (1998) focuses on relationship between educational qualifications of consumers & the extent of their awareness of consumer rights in their study they found that consumers are aware about consumers are aware about consumer rights but 98 % of educated customers did not responded to consumer forums. The consumer movement is very weak in India.

**3. Statement of the Problem:** The advancement of technology and the advent of sophisticated gadgets in the era of globalization have not only thrown open a wide choice for the consumers in the markets but the aggressive marketing strategies rendered the vulnerable to a plethora problems associated with such rapid changes. The consumer protection Act 1986 guarantees the rights such as right to safety , right to be informed right to choose, right to be heard, right to redress, right to education and right to healthy environment and also the act expects the consumer to assert his rights and to develop consumer organizations. In this context, that the consumer should be well aware of his rights and responsibilities. To understand the level of the consumer awareness amongst the citizens of Mahabubnagar District, the researcher has selected the related title to enlighten of their rights and legal measures assumes importance in the light of safeguarding the interest of the consumer and that forms as the problem of the study. Hence, the research finds the initiative to study the consumer awareness among the public in a backward district like Mahabubnagar.

#### **4. Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the consumer awareness amongst people regarding the Rights.
2. To study the awareness of consumer Responsibilities & Protection measures.

#### **5. Methodology of the Study**

**Sampling design:** The sampling technique applied for the study as simple random sampling method adopted, the respondents selected randomly from the total population.

**Sample Size:** The sample size under this study is 50 respondents. The questionnaire used to collect data from the consumer respondents by approaching directly.

**Nature of the study:** The study is descriptive. The required data for the study collected from the primary and secondary sources.

**Primary data:** The primary source constitutes the main corpus of the information, as it is reliable complete and first-hand information about the awareness of consumers under the study. The primary data collected from the sample subjects, Mahabubnagar, as it is convenient to the researchers.

**Secondary data:** Secondary data is the data already collected by some other context and which have been processed through the statistical process. The secondary data collected from the journals, books websites, and published data related to consumer education, consumer protection and consumer guidance of consumer research agencies, civil supply department & department of consumer affairs.

**Statistical tools:** Simple descriptive statistical tools like averages, percentages and ratios applied to analyze the data for drawing the conclusions.

## 6. Results and Discussion

**Table-1: Level of awareness about consumer rights**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Low	32	65
Medium	10	20
high	8	15

(Source: Primary data)

The above Table-1 indicates that the Level of awareness about the consumer rights: Majority of the respondents (65 percentages) had low level of awareness on consumer rights.

**Table-2: Level of awareness about consumer rights**

Level of awareness	Multiple Respondents
Right to safety	41
Right to choose	50
Right to information	23
Right to redressal	20
Right to education	25

(Source: Primary data)

Table-2: explains that Level of awareness about the consumer rights, Majority of the respondents (65 percentages) had low level of awareness. It is further found that highest level of the awareness (100%) was regarding the right to choose and least awareness was found regarding right to redress (40%) in direct observation.

**Table: 3 Level of awareness about Utilization of consumer rights**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Low	33	65
Medium	12	24
high	4	9

(Source: Primary data)

The Table-3: clearly implies that Majority of the respondents 65% expressed low extent of utilization of consumer rights

**Table- 4: Level of awareness on checking the expiry date of the products**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Always check	27	54
Often check	11	22
Sometimes	12	8
rarely	3	6
Never check	5	10

(Source: Primary data)

Above Table-4 indicates that 54 % of respondents as a consumer always check the expiry date of the products while buying the products, only 6% of the consumers check the expiry date rarely. It implies that majority consumers are conscious on the expiry date of the product.

**Table 5: Level of awareness on cross checking the weights of the products**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Always check	3	6
Often check	1	2
Sometimes	4	8
rarely	2	4
Never check	40	80

(Source: Primary data)

Table-5 depicts that majority of respondents (80%) never cross check the weights of the products, only 6% respondents always cross check the weights of the products.

**Table-6 : Level of awareness on checking the Prices of the products**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Always check	35	70
Often check	10	20
Sometimes	3	6
rarely	2	4
Never check	0	0

(Source: Primary data)

Above Table-6 depicts that A large number of respondents (70%) always check the prices of the products and services while 20% often check the price, 6% sometimes check, and 4% rarely check the price of the products.

**Table- 7: Level of awareness on checking the quality of the products**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Always check	32	64
Often check	14	28
Sometimes	2	4
rarely	2	4
Never check	0	0

(Source: Primary data)

The above Table-7 clearly indicates that a large number of respondents as a consumer (64%) always check the quality of the products, 28% often check, 4% sometimes check and 4% rarely check the quality of the product while buying the products.

**Table 8: Level of awareness on asking the purchasing bill.**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Always check	20	40
Often check	2	4
Sometimes	2	4
rarely	5	10
Never check	21	42

(Source: Primary data)

The above Table focus on the level of awareness about asking the purchasing bill from the trader, that the 42 % of respondents as a consumer never ask purchasing bill, 40% of respondents always ask purchasing bill, 10 % rarely ask purchasing bill and only 4% consumers often and sometimes ask purchasing bill.

**Table-9 : Level of awareness about consumer forums.**

Level of awareness	Respondents	percentage
Low	30	60
Medium	12	25
high	9	15

(Source: Primary data)

Majority of the respondents (60%) have low-level awareness about the consumer forums.

**7. Conclusion:** This study concludes that majority of the respondents showed low level of awareness and low level of utilization of consumer rights. Respondents who are aware about the consumer rights but they never lodge complaint against exploitation. The 42 % of respondents as a consumer never ask purchasing bill, 40% of respondents always ask purchasing bill, 10 % rarely ask purchasing bill and only 4% consumers often and sometimes ask purchasing bill. a large number of respondents as a consumer (64%) always check the quality of the products, 28% often check, 4% sometimes check and 4% rarely check the quality of the product while buying the products. majority of respondents (80%) never cross check the weights of the products, only 6% respondents always cross check the weights of the products. Majority of the respondents (65 percentages) had low level of awareness. It is further found that highest level of the awareness (100%) was regarding the right to choose and least awareness was found regarding right to redress (40%) in direct observation.

### 8. Suggestions:

1. Government should include consumer education in the curriculum of colleges. This will help in creating awareness about consumer protection laws amongst the public.
2. Government should also provide necessary encouragement for establishment and functioning of voluntary organizations.
3. Thus, through use of mass media, training camps & awareness camps can improve awareness level of consumers and thereby increase the utilization of consumer rights by the commerce

students. Consumer organizations and government through Consumer clubs must create awareness among the students on various issues of consumers.

**8. References:**

1. Consumer protection Act, 1986 bare act with short notes Publishers, New Delhi.
2. Consumer Protection Act, 1986, IIPA publications.
3. Consumer justice, Manual for forum presidents, Murthy, IIPA publications.