



A STUDY ON AWARENESS ABOUT CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT 1986 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOOD PRODUCT IN TIRUPPUR DISTRICT

Mrs. Prabha.L* Mrs. Kalaivani. R**

*Assistant Professor in MBA, Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Eachanari, Coimbatore, India.

**Assistant Professor in MBA, Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Eachanari, Coimbatore, India.

Abstract

The issues relating to consumer welfare affects the entire 1.17 billion people since everyone is a consumer in one way or the other. Ensuring consumer welfare is the responsibility of the government. Accepting this, policies have been framed and the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, was introduced. A separate Department of Consumer Affairs was also created in the Central and State Governments to exclusively focus on ensuring the rights of consumers as enshrined in the Act. This Act has been regarded as the most progressive, comprehensive and unique piece of legislation. In the last international conference on consumer protection held in Malaysia in 1997, the Indian Consumer Protection Act was described as one "which has set in motion a revolution in the fields of consumer rights, the parallel of which has not been seen anywhere else in the world." Consumer forum helps the consumer for the Claims of less than Rs. 5 lakh should be filed with district forum, claims of Rs. 5-Rs. 20 lakh directly with the state commission, and claims of more than Rs. 20 lakh with the National Commission. This paper aims to analyze the need for consumer protection act, awareness towards the act and legal benefits through the consumer forum.

Key Words: Consumer, Act, Food Protection, Legislation, Redressal and Adulteration.

INTRODUCTION

The consumer protection act 1986 is a milestone in the history of socio economic legislation in the country. It is one the most progressive and comprehensive pieces of legislation enacted for the protection of consumers. It was enacted after in depth study of consumer protection in number of countries and in consultation with representatives of consumers, traders and industries and extensive discussion within the government. The consumer protection act was enacted to provide a simple and quicker access of redressal of consumer grievances. The main objective of this act is to provide for the better protection of consumers. Unlike existing laws, which are punitive or preventive in nature, the provisions of this act are compensatory in nature.

NEED FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

- Physical protection of the consumer.
- Protection against deceptive and unfair trade practices.
- Protection against all types of pollution.
- Protection against the abuse of monopoly position or restrictive trade practices.
- Protection of enjoying the rights.

CONSUMER REDRESSAL FORUM

Under the Consumer Protection Act, every district has at least one consumer redressal forum also called a consumer court. Here, consumers can get their grievances heard. Above the district forums are the state commissions. At the top is the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in New Delhi. A written complaint to the company is taken as proof that the company has been informed. The complaint must be backed by copies of bills, prescriptions and other relevant documents, and should set a deadline for the company to respond. Consumers can also complain through a consumer organisation. Claims of less than Rs. 5 lakh should be filed with district forum, claims of Rs. 5-Rs. 20 lakh directly with the state commission, and claims of more than Rs. 20 lakh with the National Commission.

IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER PRODUCTION ACT IN FOOD PRODUCT

The development of food industry respect to a board definition of the right can be given in the term of food security. The issue of food security is a complex one. One has to consider not only the macro objective of food availability, but also people's ability and access to acquire food.

In India, the per capita per day food grain availability was only 510.1 gram in 1991. In recent to technologic and regulatory constraints. A commitment to ethical and responsible marketing strategies is essential to evolution of food products for



special dietary needs. Despite these complex restraints, many food products with adulterer nutrients or ingredient composition are currently available to the consumers and other enter the market place each other.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The consumer interest in the market place are enlighten with marketing mix. The business and consumerism both aim at the protection of consumer interest-business through self-regulation. Consumer is an invokes government assistance the business misbehaviors and fails to fulfill special responsibilities as the development of new food products to meet the needs of 20th century, the sequence of activities that lead to the introduction of successful product into today's highly competitive market place. It brings a beginning and foundation in extensive and ongoing market research. As the complex restrain many food products with adulterer nutrient or ingredient composition are currently available to the consumers. So we are in a position to analyze the concept of awareness of consumer protection Act, 1986 with special reference to food products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study has wide range of consumer awareness of the consumer Protection Act with special reference to food products. This study was conducted in Tirupur district which gives a few valuable reasons that may help the agency to improve safeguarding. This study is confined to the factors consider by the respondents are preferring the food products have been covered under this study. This study aims to find the factors like demographic factors and awareness related variables that influencing the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and analyzing the level of awareness of rights in consuming food products.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the food product purchasing behavior.
2. To analyze the number of performance respondents.
3. To study the awareness of consumer in food products.
4. To find out factor influencing to improve the quality of food products.

SAMPLE DESIGN

With the help of random sampling method, the researcher has collected 200 respondents in Tirupur district in order to equal representation. By measuring the level of awareness about the Consumer Protection Act 1986 of food products have been analyzed by using standard deviation, Mean, ANOVA, Weighted Score Analysis and Chi Square test. The results are exhibited.

1.1 Occupation and Most Preferred Analysis Factor

S.No	Occupation	Product Effectiveness	Food allergies	Labeling	Expire date	Total
1.	Business	14 (23.33%)	7 (22.00%)	5 (17.85%)	20 (25%)	46
2.	Employed	20 (33.33%)	8 (25.00%)	7 (25.00%)	43 (53.75%)	78
3.	Agriculture	15 (25.00%)	5 (15.62%)	5 (17.87%)	7 (8.75%)	32
4.	Professional	6 (10.00%)	7 (21.87%)	6 (21.43%)	5 (6.25%)	20
5.	Others	5 (8.30%)	5 (15.63%)	5 (17.86%)	5 (6.25%)	20
Total		60	32	28	80	200

Source: Primary data

The table 1.1 depicts that of 200 respondents taken for the study, expiry date has been analyzed by the majority (46%) of Business level respondents, and (53.75%) of employed level respondents. Product effectiveness has been analyzed by the majority (25.00%) agriculture level respondents. Food allergy has been analyzed by the majority (21.87%) of professional level respondent. Labeling has been analyzed by the majority (17.86%) of respondents are in other category.



Majority (53.75%) of the respondents have been analyzed the factor of expiry under the employed group.

1.2 Occupation and Level of Awareness

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	D.F	Mean Square	'F' Value	Table of F value at 5% level	Significance
Level of awareness	272.54	2	136.27	0.388	4.45	Not Significant
Occupational level	733.33	4	183.33	0.288	3.83	
Residual	423.47	8	52.93			
TOTAL	1429.43	14				

Source: Primary data

The calculated value of F(0.388) is less than the table value(4.45). There is no significant relationship between the occupation of the respondents and the level of awareness. The calculated value F(0.288) is less than the table value (3.83), There is no significant relation between the occupation of the respondents and level of awareness.

1.3 Weighted Score Analysis

Source of Awareness about consumer protection Act

Factors	Rank	1	2	3	4	5	Total Score	Rank
	Source	5	4	3	2	1		
Government		150	192	144	76	36	598	5
Advertisement		250	208	108	56	34	656	4
Friends and Relatives		250	112	186	52	34	634	3
Lawyers		200	240	168	232	64	904	2
Educational Institutions		250	168	84	96	32	630	1

Source: Primary data.

It is understood by the table 1.3 that the source of awareness about consumer protection act was Highest through Lawyers (904).656 total score is obtained by with regards to advertisement , 634 total score is obtained with regards to friends and relatives, 630 of total score is obtained with regards to the government. Thus the maximum score of 904 is obtained from the sources of awareness from lawyers.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The highest (47%) constitute in the case of medium level of awareness and the majority of the respondents are youth, around the age group of 25.
- There is a significant relationship between age group, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income and level of awareness.
- The mean awareness score is higher in the case of college level and professionally qualified respondents.
- The weighted score analysis point out the lawyer are mostly aware about the consumer protection act.
- The highest (40%) constitute in the case of expiry date. Hence , most of the consumer are analyzing the factors of expiry date while buying their food products.

SUGGESTIONS

- The consumer court should maintain the direct relationship between literate and illiterate consumers and their claims.



- The consumer court should create awareness towards the notification of state government and district forum in an efficient manner.
- In order to increase the level of awareness, the government should announce some more protective measures like expansion of services, legal advices for increasing the same.
- The state government should establish more than one forum in a single district with well qualified judges. So that the consumers can approach easily with claims.

CONCLUSION

To be a global leader in the areas of food industry, there are some key that require immediate attention from government in India. These include improved infrastructure and supply chain, chain reduced taxes and evolved regulatory frame work. Simultaneously the industry players also need to focus on the issues of capacity building right from striving for quality products meeting global standards ,setting up awareness of concept and developing affordable products for masses. The government should also become socially responsible and look to opportunities to give back ti the every society.

REFERENCES

1. A.D Agarwal, consumer protection in India, Deep and Deep Publication, 1989
2. Adkin, Ross Natalie and L.Ozanne.”critical Consumer Education: Empower the low- Literature consumer”, Journal of marketing, 25th December, New York,2005.
3. P.Basu, consumer protection Digest, Vinod Publishing house, Delhi, 1998.
4. K.Kumar sasi, Need for awareness of consumer protection in India, orient Publishing, New Delhi, 1995.
5. Consumer protection Act, 1986: Bare act with short notes, Universal law publishing, New Delhi, 2000.
6. Journal of Consumer Policy, Volume 10, Netherland, 1987.
7. Journal of Indian Law Institute, Volume 29, No 3, July-September 1987.