

A STUDY ON CONSUMERS PERCEPTION TOWARDS CONSUMERISM OF COIMBATORE

Dr. M. RAJARAJESWARI

Assistant Professor & Head of the Department

Department of B.Com(Accounting & Finance) and B.Com(Business Analytics)
PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Peelamedu, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India
Email: rajim@psgrkc.ac.in

Abstract: *In India the government has taken a number of measures to protect consumer interest in the form of statutory regulation of private business and development and expansion of the public sector. Even though, the government has developed legal protection they are not sufficient to protect the interest of the consumers. Due to this in almost all the country in the world, consumer associations work to protect the interest of the consumer. There are many well-organized good international institutions meant for guiding and aiding consumers. Many of them strive to work as consumer organizations and promote consumerism. In this perception a study of consumer's perception and attitude is performed on 150 respondents of Coimbatore city to understand the awareness level towards consumerism.*

Key Words : *consumerism, consumer perception, consumer rights,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Consumerism concerned with truth in advertising, safety and quality of ingredients and full and reliable labeling. In earlier days, consumerism involved in protection of consumers against overcharging deception that affect public at large. But new consumer movement has added certain sociological aspects also it aims at improving health services, utilizes safety and consumers representation. Although various scientific and technological developments have brought about percentile socio-economic changes, the consumers control the over the market mechanism has gradually diminished. His perception in choice of goods and services has been greatly eroded by various forms of unfair monopolistic and deceptive trade practices.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The consumer is no longer a king and a pedestal position, which he occupied in the past, is conspicuous by its existence today, protection of their interest and rights is very vital in their welfare state like India. Various unscrupulous manufactures and traders in the market place exploit the consumers by way of overcharging, adulteration and sub standard quality, cheating on weights, variations on the content of the packs misleading advertising and mail-order frauds.

In order to safeguard the consumer, government has passed many laws and they have been amended from time to time to exercise better protection of consumers. In this regard consumer association has also formed in all parts of the country. The main function of the consumer association is to create consumer awareness. Many consumers do not know about their responsibilities and the function of the consumer association. Many of them are not aware of the role of redressal system and do not know whom to approach for loading the complaints they face any type of problem. Keeping this in view, the study is focused to analyze the awareness of the consumers in Coimbatore about their responsibilities, their perception and their level of awareness about consumer trademarks, consumer association and consumer rights.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Andrew Eiler, The Consumer Protection Manual, Facts on File, (1984). has given detailed information intended to educate the consumers about their specific rights as purchasers. The first section describes how to make a convincing case when faced with a consumer problem. The second section provides an overview of consumer protection laws. The major part of this book examines the relevant laws at each stage of purchase, covering advertising and sales practices, a buyer's rights and obligations, warranties and methods of payment.

M. Rengasamy The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, (1989) has examined the various possible forms of exploitation of consumers by manufacturers and traders, and the current state of laws relating to the problems of consumer protection against exploitation. He has pointed out these factors which contribute to the preparation of such consumer exploitation and the effectiveness of the existing legal mechanism in the light of current knowledge of the causes and treatment of the disorder. Finally, he has offered valuable suggestions to enhance consumer protection.

S.V. Gulshan Consumer Protection and Satisfaction, (1994) has pointed out the position of Indian consumers and their problems. He has appraised the Consumer Protection Act and its allied Acts. The details of redressal machineries at District, State and National levels form the highlights. The important decisions affecting consumers have been discussed in the book.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

To identify the awareness of consumers towards trademarks of the product

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The primary data was collected from the respondents through questionnaire. The sample sizes consists of 150 consumers of Coimbatore are selected using Convenience sampling technique.

6. TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS:

Chi-Square Test, ANOVA And T- Test

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

TABLE 1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND LODGING COMPLAINTS IN CASE OF BEING CHEATED

H₀ - There is no significant relationship between personal factors and lodging complaints in case of being cheated

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS	CACULATED VALUE	TABLE VALUE	SIGNIFICANT/ NOT SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
AGE	7.172	7.815	Not significant	5%
GENDER	0.483	3.841	Not significant	5%
MARITAL STATUS	0.047	3.841	Not Significant	5%
EDUCATION QUAIFICATION	10.404	9.488	Significant	5%
OCCUPATION	8.733	9.488	Not significant	5%
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME	18.284	11.345	Significant	1%
AREA RESIDING	2.568	5.991	Not significant	5%

Chi square test was applied to find whether there is any significant relationship between personal factors and lodging complaints it is inferred from the table that the hypothesis is accepted with regard to age, gender, marital status, occupation, residing area. So it is concluded that lodging complaint is not influenced by those factors. But hypothesis is rejected in case of education qualification and monthly income hence these factors have a significant influence on lodging complaint.

TABLE 1.2 AGE AND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

H₀ -There is no significant difference among the age groups and consumer rights awareness scores.

PARTICULARS		CONSUMER RIGHTS-AWARENESS SCORE				
		Mean	S.D	No.		
Age	<=25 years	4.38	1.80	53		
	26-35 years	3.00	1.86	42		
	36-45 years	2.85	1.88	27		
	Above 45 years	3.57	1.91	28		
Total		3.57	1.94	150		
		SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	Sig
Between groups		62.116	3	20.705	6.037	**
Within groups		500.717	146	3.430		
Total		562.833	149			

One way ANOVA was applied to find whether there is any significance difference between the groups in the average awareness scores. The ANOVA result shows that the calculated F-ratio value is 6.037 which are greater than he table value the hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is inferred that the average awareness scores is highly influenced by are groups of the respondents.

TABLE 1.3 EDUCTIONAL QUAIFICATION AND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

H₀ -There is no significant difference among the educational qualification in the average awareness scores.

PARTICULARS		CONSUMER RIGHTS-AWARENESS SCORE		
		MEAN	S.D	NO
EDUCATION	SCHOOL LEVEL	2.21	1.70	38
	UG	3.79	1.94	42
	PG	4.35	1.75	46
	PROFESSIONAL	4.33	1.14	18
	OTHERS	2.33	2.07	6
Total		3.57	1.94	150

	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	Sig
Between groups	119.678	4	29.919	9.790	**
Within groups	443.55	145	3.056		
Total	562.833	149			

One way ANOVA was applied to find whether there is any significant difference among the occupation in the average awareness score. The ANOVA results show that the calculated F-ratio value is 4.750 which is greater than the table value of 3.451 at 1% level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value the hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is inferred that the occupational status of the respondents also influences the average awareness scores.

TABLE 1.4 MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME AND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

H₀ - There is no significant difference among the monthly family income in the average awareness scores.

PARTICULARS		CONSUMER RIGHTS-AWARENESS SCORE		
		MEAN	S.D	NO
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME	Less than Rs.10000	2.21	1.70	38
	Rs.10000-20000	3.79	1.94	42
	Rs.20000-30000	4.35	1.75	46
	Rs.30000-40000	4.33	1.14	18
	More than Rs.40000	2.33	2.07	6
Total		3.57	1.94	150

	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F	Sig
Between groups	75.173	3	25.058	7.502	**
Within groups	487.660	146	3.456		
Total	562.833	149			

One way ANOVA was applied to find whether there is any significant difference among the monthly family income in the average awareness score. The ANOVA results show that the calculated F-ratio value is 7.502 which are greater than the table value of 3.451 at 1% level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value the hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is inferred that the occupational status of the respondents also influences the average awareness scores.

TABLE 1.5 RESIDING AREA AND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

H₀ - There is no significant difference among the residing area in the average awareness scores.

PARTICULARS		CONSUMER RIGHTS-AWARENESS SCORE		
		MEAN	S.D	NO
AREA RESIDING	Rural	2.21	1.70	38
	Urban	3.79	1.94	42
	Semi urban	2.33	2.07	6
Total		3.57	1.94	150

	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN	F	Sig
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			SQUARES		
Between groups	30.473	2	15.237	4.207	**
Within groups	532.360	147	3.621		
Total	562.833	149			

One way ANOVA was applied to find whether there is any significant difference among the areas residing in the average awareness score. The ANOVA results show that the calculated F-ratio value is 4.207 which are greater than the table value of 3.451 at 1% level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value the hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is inferred that the occupational status of the respondents also influences the average awareness scores.

TABLE 1.6 GENDER AND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

H₀ -There is no significant difference among the male and female in the average awareness scores.

PARTICULARS		CONSUMER RIGHTS-AWARENESS SCORE		
		MEAN	S.D	NO
GENDER	MALE	3.54	1.99	92
	FEMALE	3.60	1.89	58
Total		3.57	1.94	150
		T	DT	SIG
		0.183	148	Ns

One way ANOVA was applied to find whether there is any significant difference among the male and female in the average awareness score. The ANOVA results show that the calculated t-ratio value is 0.183 which are greater than the table value of 1.976 at 5% level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value the hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is inferred by the difference in the category of male and female.

TABLE 1.7 MARITAL STATUS AND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER RIGHTS

H₀ - There is no significant difference among the married and unmarried in the average awareness scores.

PARTICULARS		CONSUMER RIGHTS-AWARENESS SCORE		
		MEAN	S.D	NO
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	3.29	1.87	87
	UNMARRIED	3.95	1.99	63
Total		3.57	1.94	150
		T	DT	SIG
		2.092	148	*

One way t-test was applied to find whether there is any significant difference among the male and female in the average awareness score. The t-test results show that the calculated t-ratio value is 2.092 which are greater than the table value of 1.976 at 5% level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value the hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is inferred by the difference in the category of married and unmarried.

8. FINDINGS :

- The respondents for the research are of different age groups and majority of respondents belongs to age group of less than 25 years.
- Majority of the respondents are female and they are married.
- Majority of the respondents are postgraduates who are employed and earning income of less than Rs.10000 .
- Majority of the respondents surveyed resides in urban area and they belong to nuclear family.
- Majority of the respondents are aware of the trademark given to gold jewellery and they are highly aware AGMARK trade system.
- Majority of the respondents are aware that have right to choose.
- Majority of the respondents are aware of lodging a complaint in case of consumer goods.
- Majority of the respondents have not faced any problem and in case of any problem they wish to lodge a complaint.

- The study reveals that the educational qualification and monthly family income have significant influence on lodging complaint whereas age, gender, marital status, occupational status and residing area do not have influence on it.
- The study reveals that the awareness scores is influenced by the marital status while gender do not have any influence on it.

9. CONCLUSION :

It is clear that the consumers are exposed to many hazards, physical, environmental and emotional. Even though the awareness level of the consumer started increasing rapidly increasing to a great extent, in a country like India, there is a great need for consumer protection. With better awareness on the part of the consumers it is expected that there is a tremendous scope of consumerism. The educated consumers of India have started considering consumerism as necessary for improving the quality of life, since it touches the basic need of man, apart from food, shelter and clothing. It is estimated that about two thirds of the total spending in our economy comes from the consumers' community. The interest of huge should therefore, be taken care of and well protected. Consumerism has, thus emerged as a social as well as a legal force to protect the interest of the consumers.

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