



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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## AWARENESS ABOUT CONSUMER RIGHTS IN INDIA IN THE GLOBALIZED BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT - AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH STATE

**DR. K. JAYACHANDRA REDDY**

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
PROJECT DIRECTOR OF ICSSAR-RP  
SRI VANKATESHWARA UNIVERSITY P.G. CENTRE  
KAVALI – 524 201**

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**DR. N. PRAVEEN KUMAR REDDY**

**PROFESSOR  
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
JIMMA UNIVERSITY  
JIMMA  
ETHIOPIA**

### ABSTRACT

*The consumer has been ill-treated since a long time in the market milieu in developed, developing as well as under developed countries. Consumers are being miserably cheated and misled by the unscrupulous middlemen and the manufacturers of goods and services by adopting malpractices like adulteration, underweighting, inferior quality, duplicate goods, misleading advertisement, and the like. It is continuing still in India with various degrees of exploitation in the entire sphere of trade due to lack of awareness about the consumer rights among the consumers. In India a plethora of legal measures came into force to protect the interest of consumers. In this process the Consumer Protection Act recognizes six specific rights of the consumers i.e., Right to Safety, Right to be Informed, Right to Choose, Right to be Heard, Right to Consumer Education, Right to Seek Redressal. A good number of programmes are organizing by the government to educate the consumers regarding their rights at different levels. But still there are consumers in rural area totally unaware about their rights because of various reasons like low literacy level, lack of initiation from the government side, lack of interest of consumers, lack of media support, etc. The present research paper is an attempt to highlight the level of awareness about the consumer rights and the various laws, which are in force to protect the consumer interest in India in general and the state of Andhra Pradesh in particular with a sample investigation of 600 respondent consumers.*

### KEYWORDS

Consumer, Unfair Trade Practices, Awareness, and Right.

### INTRODUCTION

The consumer has been ill-treated since a long time in the market milieu in the developed, developing as well as under developed countries. Consumers are being miserably cheated and misled by the unscrupulous middlemen and the manufacturers of goods and services at large in many ways everywhere in general and India in particular. They are unaware and uniformed of the tricks of the businessmen. Certain malpractices like adulteration, underweighting, supply of inferior quality of goods and services, selling of duplicate goods, misleading advertisement, sale of expired life saving drugs, false representation of the features of the product and service, misleading advertisement, deceptive sale practices, difference between the price printed on the goods and the actual selling price and the like are adopting by the middlemen, traders and manufacturers to get benefit on the cost of consumer. Lack of education, lack of information, poverty, etc. are the various main factors responsible for consumer exploitation. It is continuing still in our country with various degrees of exploitation in the entire sphere of trade due to lack of awareness particularly about the consumer rights in all the regions of the country but the exploitation of consumers is more in the rural areas.

In India a plethora of legal measures came into force to protect the interest of consumers, which are enacted by the Central Governments. Some of the laws that provide for consumer protection are: The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act, 1937, The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, The Dangerous Drugs Act, 1930, The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, The Drugs Act, 1950, The Indian Contract Act, 1872, The Essential Commodities Act, 1955, Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981, The Indian Penal Code, 1860, The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, The Sale of Goods Act, 1930, The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practice Act, 1969, The Hire Purchase Act, 1972, The Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, The Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976, The Indian Standards Institution (Certification Marks) Act, 1952, The Cigarettes (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1975, The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, The Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 and the latest The Right to Information Act, 2005. However, many of these legal measures are ineffective in safeguarding the interest of consumers' at all levels and also they are inaccessible and unknown to many consumers. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 is an important legal measure made by the Indian Government. The Consumer Protection Act recognizes six specific rights of the consumers i.e., Right to Safety, Right to Information, Right to Choose, Right to be Heard, Right to Consumer Education, Right to seek Redressal. A good number of programmes are organizing by the government to educate the consumers regarding their rights at different levels. But still there are consumers in rural areas totally unaware about their rights because of various reasons like low literacy level, lack of initiation from the government side, lack of interest of consumers, lack of media support etc. The specific consumer rights presented here in detail.

### RIGHT TO SAFETY

This right is intended to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices of traders and hazardous effects of the goods and services on the health or life of the consumers and property of consumers. In the modern world, the individuals' life is becoming more and more complex as the individuals have very less time

to evaluate the various offers and thereby they are forced to make quick decisions. The changing life styles, fashions and tastes of the consumers are providing more chance to the businessmen to exploit the consumers by offering hazardous and inferior products and services. In the present competitive business world the consumers are exploited in all respects of services and goods, such as adulterated products, duplicate and expired life saving medicines, substandard building materials, poor health service, faulty home and electric appliances, underweight and so on. Under these circumstances the right to safety assumes greater importance. This right is not only to the individuals but also to the society at large.

#### **RIGHT TO BE INFORMED**

The adequate information of a product or service supports the buyer to have or not to have it. If choice is the engine of consumers' power, then information is the fuel on which it runs. Individual consumers cannot make proper decision about what can serve them best without adequate, accurate and understandable information. The information required is not only from the physical properties or the function of a good or service but also on the legal implications of the transactions. The relevant information in this regard safeguards the interest of the buyers or the consumer. Every consumer is generally interested to know the price, quantity, quality, size, name of the manufacturer, manufacturing date, expiry date, safety precautions, warranty and other information relating to the product. The right to information ensures the supply of such information with every article or service traded in the market. It is a legal obligation that every manufacturer, retailer and the trader should provide necessary information to the consumers in all of their transactions.

#### **RIGHT TO CHOICE**

The right to choice is to provide access to a variety of goods of various qualities, prices, sizes and designs and to provide the consumer a chance to select the product that it satisfies his wants. In a competitive market economy consumer choice is the essence to make the transactions efficiently. The major problem of the market world is the imbalance of the tastes and choice of the consumers and producers. The ever-changing tastes, preference, fashions of the consumers' influence the manufacturers to conduct surveys before produce the goods and services. Monopolies are the most common form of the imbalance forcing consumers to accept what is being offered to them. In such cases it is highly unlikely that consumers will be able to see their needs and interests, rather than those of the products are best served. Even where there no monopoly, producers may work together in such a way that, although there is an appearance of choice, consumers are effectively being offered the same thing. While buying goods and services, the consumer generally expects the satisfaction and maximum benefit rather than quantity and features of the product. Those products or services that can offer maximum benefits and satisfaction to the consumers will be preferred. The right to choice ensures the consumers to feel to evaluate various alternatives available by avoiding aggressive sales pressures and to select the right one.

#### **RIGHT TO BE HEARD**

One of the important principles of justice is the right to be heard. It helps the individuals to make representation at various places for consideration against exploitative elements in the market economy. Whenever the consumer identifies defects of products or any other problem relating to goods and services that he has bought, if he want to communicate the same to the seller, the seller should give a patient hearing to the problem of the consumer or the receiver of the services. The seller should arrange a system that can attend to the problems of consumer. This right encourages the consumers to make representation regarding their problems either orally or in writing or through media or any other acceptable means.

#### **RIGHT TO CONSUMER EDUCATION**

Consumer education refers to educate the consumer constantly with regards to their roles and rights in the market environment. In other words, consumers must be aware of the rights they can enjoy against the loss they suffer on account of goods and services purchased. Government has to take several steps to educate the consumers continuously. Thus, the concerned ministry of the government at state and central level should take necessary measures to educate the consumers from time to time through media and publishing magazines, news articles, palm lets etc. and supply to the public in large on free of cost.

#### **RIGHT TO SEEK REDRESSAL**

Right to seek redressal is one of the most important consumer right given in the Consumer Protection Act. Right to seek redressal means the right to receive compensation for misrepresentation or defect goods or services and where needed, free legal aid or an accepted form of redress for small claims should be available.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The present research work is an earnest attempt to probe in to the level of awareness about consumer rights and the various laws in force to protect the consumer interest in state of Andhra Pradesh. The study is carried with the following important specific objectives:

- To find out the level of awareness about different consumer rights in the study area
- To know the level of awareness of consumers about Consumer Protection Act, 1986
- To find out the level of awareness of respondents about the other Acts which are in force to protect the consumer interest
- To know the level of awareness about redressal mechanism of consumer disputes, viz. three tier mechanism
- To offer reasonable suggestion to over improve the consumer awareness about various issues.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study is mainly based on the primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from the selected respondents of Andhra Pradesh state from one district from each of the three regions of Rayalaseema, Costal Region and Telengana Region. Actually the state of Andhra Pradesh consists of 23 districts in three regions as mentioned above. An extensive survey was conducted in the districts during the months of April and May of 2010.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The primary data was collected from 600 respondents of four groups of consumers namely Farmers, House-wives, Businessmen, and Employees through structured questionnaire. Necessary additional information about the theoretical backdrop of consumer rights and different laws are in force to protect the consumer interest was collected from various books published by different eminent researchers about the consumer issues.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study covers the process of identifying the level and extent of awareness of consumers about the rights specified in the Consumer Protection Act and also the awareness about some of the laws in force to protect the interest of consumers even though too many laws were enacted by the Government of India to safeguard the consumer interest in almost all unfair practices of the business and other.

### **INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA**

The collected data from the respondents through questionnaires are presented hereunder in table form with detailed analysis and explanations.

**TABLE NO.1: OCCUPATION-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS**

Category	Male	Female	Total
Farmers	121(80.67)	29(19.33)	150(100.00)
House-wives	-	150(100.00)	150(100.00)
Businessmen	109(72.67)	41(27.33)	150(100.00)
Employees	98(65.33)	52(34.67)	150(100.00)
Total	328(54.67)	272(45.33)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

It is inferred from the above table that out of the 600 respondents 54.67 per cent are male and 45.33 per cent are female, almost in the study it is given equal importance to both the sex of respondents.

**TABLE NO.2: AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS**

Category	20-30years	31-40 years	41-50	50 above	Total
Farmers	13(8.67)	46(30.67)	71(47.33)	20(13.33)	150(100.00)
House-wives	24(16.00)	51(34.00)	56(37.33)	19(12.67)	150(100.00)
Businessmen	12(8.00)	42(28.00)	45(30.00)	51(34.00)	150(100.00)
Employees	15(10.00)	57(38.00)	58(38.67)	20(13.33)	150(100.00)
Total	64(10.67)	196(32.67)	230(38.33)	110(18.33)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

It is clear from the above table that the age wise distribution of respondents in the study area. Out of the 600 respondents 10.67 per cent falls between the age group of 20-30 years, 32.67 per cent falls between 31-40 years, 38.33 per cent falls between 41-50 years and 18.33 per cent falls in the age group of 50 years above.

**TABLE NO.3: EDUCATION-WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS**

Category	Illiterate	Primary/Secondary	Graduation	Post-Graduation	Total
Farmers	59(39.33)	61(40.67)	30(20.00)	--	150(100.00)
House-wives	13(8.67)	62(41.33)	47(31.33)	28(18.67)	150(100.00)
Businessmen	14(9.33)	34(22.67)	78(52.00)	24(16.00)	150(100.00)
Employees	--	26(17.33)	71(47.33)	53(35.34)	150(100.00)
Total	86(14.33)	183(30.50)	226(37.67)	105(17.50)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

The education wise distribution of respondents in the study area is clearly presented in the table no.3. It is evident from the above table that the data about the awareness level collected from 14.33 per cent of illiterates, 30.50 per cent of primary or secondary educators, 37.67 per cent graduates and the remaining 17.50 per cent of respondents are post-graduates.

**TABLE NO.4: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO SAFETY**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	57 (38.00)	39 (26.00)	117 (78.00)	114 (76.00)	327 (54.50)
Unaware	93 (62.00)	111 (74.00)	33 (22.00)	36 (24.00)	273 (45.5012)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

The above table no.4 portrays the level of awareness about the important right of consumers 'Right to Safety'. It is clear from the data that out of 600 respondent consumers about 54.50 per cent are aware of this right and the remaining 45.50 per cent unaware. In category wise analysis 62 per cent of farmers, 74 per cent of Housewives, 22 per cent of businessmen, and 24 per cent of employees are unaware of this right.

**TABLE NO.5: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO BE INFORMED**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	51 (34.00)	33 (22.00)	126 (84.00)	120 (80.00)	330 (55.00)
Unaware	99 (66.00)	117 (78.00)	24 (16.00)	30 (20.00)	270 (45.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

It is evident from the above table no.5 that around 55 per cent of consumers are aware and 45 per cent are unaware about the 'Right to be Informed' in the study area of state of Andhra Pradesh. In category wise inquiry of respondents 34 per cent of farmers, 22 per cent of housewives, 84 per cent of businessmen and 80 per cent of employees are aware and 66 per cent of farmers, 78 per cent of housewives, 16 per cent of businessmen and 20 per cent of employees are unaware about this right.

**TABLE NO.6: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO CHOICE**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	102 (68.00)	63 (42.00)	150 (100.00)	135 (90.00)	450 (75.00)
Unaware	48 (32.00)	87 (58.00)	--	15 (10.00)	150 (25.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey



Table no.6 shows the level of awareness about the 'Right to Choice' it is an important right in the hands of consumers, that they may select a product or service as per their wish and will. In the study it is found that 68 per cent of farmers, 42 per cent of housewives, 100 per cent of businessmen, and 90 per cent of employees are aware about this right. Out of 600 respondents 32 per cent of farmers, 58 per cent of housewives, and 10 per cent of employees are unaware about this. In total out of 600 respondents only 26 per cent are unaware and the remaining 74 per cent are aware of this right.

**TABLE NO.7: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO BE HEARD**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	81 (54.00)	78 (52.00)	105 (70.00)	96 (64.00)	360 (60.00)
Unaware	69 (46.00)	72 (48.00)	45 (30.00)	54 (36.00)	240 (40.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

It is inferred from the table no.7 that about 60 per cent of respondents are aware and 40 per cent are unaware about the right to be heard out of the 600 respondents in Andhra Pradesh state. In detailed analysis of the study 54 per cent of farmers, 52 per cent of housewives, 70 per cent of businessmen and 64 per cent of employees are aware. Whereas out of the 600 respondents 46 per cent of farmers, 48 per cent of housewives, 30 per cent of businessmen and 36 per cent of employees are unaware about this right to be heard.

**TABLE NO.8: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO CONSUMER EDUCATION**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	06 (04.00)	18 (12.00)	69 (46.00)	75 (50.00)	168 (28.00)
Unaware	144 (96.00)	132 (88.00)	81 (54.00)	75 (50.00)	432 (72.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

The above table shows the level of awareness of the consumers about the right to have consumer education regarding various consumer related rules and laws in force in protecting their interest. In the present survey, out of 600 respondents 28 per cent are aware and 72 per cent are unaware about the right to have consumer education. In specific analysis of consumers respondents in the state majority are unaware in all categories of respondents i.e. 96 per cent of farmers, 88 per cent of housewives, 54 per cent of businessmen and 50 per cent of employees are unaware.

**TABLE NO.9: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO SEEK REDRESSAL**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	54 (36.00)	81 (54.00)	150 (100.00)	117 (78.00)	402 (67.00)
Unaware	96 (64.00)	69 (46.00)	--	33 (22.00)	198 (33.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

The present study finds from the above table no.9 that majority of the farmers are unaware about the 'Right to seek Redressal'. It clear from the analysis that 36 per cent of farmers, 54 per cent of housewives, 100 per cent of businessmen and 78 per cent of employees are aware about this right. However, 64 per cent of farmers, 46 per cent of housewives, and 22 per cent of employees are unaware about this right to seek redressal. In general out of 600 respondents 67 per cent are aware and 33 per cent are unaware about this right.

**TABLE NO.10: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY, MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	39 (26.00)	48 (32.00)	99 (66.00)	93 (62.00)	279 (46.50)
Unaware	111 (74.00)	102 (68.00)	51 (34.00)	57 (38.00)	321 (53.50)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

Table no.10 depicts the level of awareness of consumers about World Consumer Rights Day, March 15<sup>th</sup>. It is found from the table that out of 600 respondents only 46.50 per cent are aware and 53.50 per cent are unaware about the consumer rights day. In particular out of 150 respondents of each category 26 per cent of farmers, 32 per cent of housewives, 66 per cent of businessmen and 62 per cent of employees are aware. And 74 per cent of farmers, 68 per cent of housewives, 34 per cent of businessmen and 38 per cent of employees are unaware about the consumer rights day.

**TABLE NO.11: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	48 (32.00)	66 (44.00)	150 (100.00)	120 (80.00)	384 (64.00)
Unaware	102 (68.00)	84 (56.00)	--	30 (20.00)	216 (36.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

One of the crucial Acts in force to protect the consumer interest in India is Consumer Protection Act, 1986 but out of the total respondents of 600 in Andhra Pradesh 36 per cent unaware and 64 per cent are aware about the Law. In detailed analysis, 32 per cent of farmers, 44 per cent of housewives, 100 per cent of

businessmen, and 80 per cent of employees are aware. And 68 per cent of farmers, 56 per cent of housewives, and 20 per cent of employees are unaware about the Consumer Protection Act.

**TABLE NO.12: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	21 (14.00)	48 (32.00)	123 (82.00)	114 (76.00)	306 (51.00)
Unaware	129 (86.00)	102 (68.00)	27 (18.00)	36 (24.00)	294 (49.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

The table no.12 given below shows the level of awareness of respondents about Essential Commodities Act. It is clear from the table that 14 per cent of farmers, 32 per cent of housewives, 82 per cent of businessmen and 76 per cent of employees are aware about this Act. However, 86 per cent of farmers, 68 per cent of housewives, 18 per cent of businessmen, and 24 per cent of employees are unaware about this Act in Andhra Pradesh state. In general out of 600 consumer respondents 51 per cent are aware and 49 per cent unaware.

**TABLE NO.13: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT OTHER MISC. CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	18 (12.00)	48 (32.00)	114 (76.00)	99 (66.00)	279 (46.50)
Unaware	132 (88.00)	102 (68.00)	36 (24.00)	51 (34.00)	321 (53.50)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

It is clear from the table no.13 that 46.50 per cent of respondents are aware and 53.50 per cent unaware about the various miscellaneous Acts are in force to protect the consumer interest in the country out of 600 respondents in the state of Andhra Pradesh such as Indian Penal Code 1860, Contract Act 1872, The sale of Goods Act, 1930, Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940, Indian Standard Institution (Certification Mark) Act 1952 (Changed to bureau of Indian standards Act, 1986), Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954, Standards of Weight and Measures Act 1956 and 1976, etc. In detailed presentation of the data regarding consumer awareness 12 per cent of farmers, 32 per cent of housewives, 76 per cent of businessmen, and 66 per cent of employees are aware. And 88 per cent of farmers, 68 per cent of housewives, 24 per cent of businessmen, and 34 per cent of employees are unaware about the above mentioned various Acts are in force to protect the consumer interest in India.

**TABLE NO.14: LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT CONSUMER DISPUTE REDRESSAL MECHANISM**

Opinion	Farmers	House-wives	Businessmen	Employees	Total
Aware	39 (26.00)	48 (32.00)	150 (100.00)	123 (82.00)	360 (60.00)
Unaware	111 (74.00)	102 (68.00)	--	27 (18.00)	240 (40.00)
Total	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	600

Source: Compiled from field survey

It is crystal clear from the table no. 14 about the level of awareness regarding three tier redressal mechanisms functioning at district level, state level and nation level to resolve the consumer disputes regarding the services or products in the country. It is found from the table that out of 600 respondents 60 per cent are aware and 40 per cent are unaware about the redressal mechanism. In comprehensive analysis of various categories or respondents, 26 per cent of farmers, 32 per cent of housewives, 100 per cent of businessmen, and 82 per cent of employees are aware, but 74 per cent of farmers, 68 per cent of housewives and 27 per cent of employees are unaware about the redressal mechanism working to solve the disputes of consumers.

## FINDINGS

- It is well-known fact that the educational background of a respondent will influence the results of any investigation to a maximum extent. It is found from the study that around 45 per cent of respondents are having only school education.
- It is found that the majority of the farmers and house-wives are unaware about the specific consumer rights available to protect the consumers' interest than the other class of consumers
- The present investigation reveals that more than 50 per cent of respondents are unaware about World Consumer Rights Day of 15<sup>th</sup> March of every year.
- It is identified from the study that more than one-third of respondents are not aware about the significant consumer protection law namely Consumer Protection Act, 1986 enacted to protect the consumer interest.
- From the present study it is found that more around 50 per cent are uninformed about Essential Commodities Act and other miscellaneous laws in force in the country to safeguard the consumer interest.
- It is found from the study that around 40 per cent respondents are ignorant about three tier Redressal Mechanism functioning at various levels to protect the consumers from the clutches of the ruthless business community from different malpractices, unfair trade practices and defective goods and services.
- It is found from our direct discussion with the respondents it is found that the ignorance about various consumer protection issues due lack of proper channel of educating the consumers and their literacy level.

## SUGGESTIONS

- It is a noteworthy suggestion that as per the opinion of greater part of the respondents in the region of study that the governments should feel the necessity and urgency of consumers' education at various levels in different means.
- The literacy level of the society is the panacea for all the social evils. Hence it is suggested that the government and non-governmental organisations should take necessary stringent measures to improve the literacy level of the all sections of people.
- Based on the majority of respondents opinion, it is suggested that the government should take necessary steps to add at-least a chapter in the school education about the consumer issues and rights because the existing set of courses is not covering the topics concerning to consumer issues at any stage of education.

- To create awareness in the society about consumer rights and protection measures and laws in force, the governmental organizations should conduct educational camps and exhibiting documentary films at villages and in busy area regularly is one of the important suggestions.
- It is a note worthy suggestion that the media, particularly electronic media has to take initiation voluntarily or the government should direct them to telecast the programmes to create awareness about the consumer related issues repeatedly.
- Hiring the services of celebrities like film stars, cricket players, athletes, sportsmen, etc., by the government, media, voluntary organization, etc., is one of the modes to create awareness about role of the consumer in the market to protect themselves from the unfair trade practices.
- Governments, either central or state should establish an exclusive board to educate the public about the consumers' rights and the other consumer related issues continuously to protect themselves from the clutches of unscrupulous business community.
- Voluntary or consumer welfare association should take initiative to organize playwrights, educational camps, about consumer related issues in schools, colleges and public places frequently to educate the students at large and also the general public.
- Door-to-door canvassing by the government, voluntary associations, and consumer welfare organisations to disseminate the information relating to the consumer welfare is an important suggestion.
- It is recommended that the government should take steps to establish consumer information centre in the busy market areas and distributing pamphlet to the consumers through sales outlets regarding consumer rights and other matters use to protect the interest of consumers'.
- Government, which has at its disposal all the required resources, should take the initiative and motivate the consumers through the mass media about knowledge of consumer interests, rights and Redressal means should be presented in a simple, direct and lucid manner that consumers of all segments understand them.
- Government should set up effective vigilance committees to monitor the process and procedures of business community continuously to safeguard the interest of consumers from the unfair trade practices.
- Generally there is a difference between the printed price and the selling price is so great, that consumers are misled and confused. The Government with its mechanism has to curb all such confusing and unscrupulous business practices and see that consumer durables are standardized
- The consumer awareness related information should be published in news papers, periodicals, journals, magazines, etc. in an attractive manner to educate the consumers by and large.
- A substantial awareness campaign wherein all the basic information about the market milieu, the rights, of consumers in the market, the redressal procedure for their problems and the procedure to approach consumer forums, are brought home to the average consumer.
- It is an important suggestion that the consumers themselves take care before making purchases by verifying the quality, price, service guaranty and other instructions of the manufactures.
- Finally, it is recommended that the government should take essential rigorous steps regarding the moral values should be followed by the business world. Protection of consumer interest with good morale is the social responsibility of the business community when they are benefiting on the cost of consumers.

## CONCLUSION

Consumers are playing vital role in different stages in the market scenario. In spite of consumer protection measures and laws, consumers are cheated miserably in one way or other by dishonest businessmen in the market environment. This is the need of hour to implement the Acts stringently, punish the culprits and also to educate the consumers at huge level to protect their interest to a great extent. Thus the above offered suggestions are practicable and if they are implemented strictly the entire consumer community directly and the society indirectly will be educated to a maximum extent about the consumer rights, role in the market and the other related issues of protecting consumers' interest and finally the society will be benefited and developed by and large.

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