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Study on prevention of consumer from exploitation in market

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify the ways how to prevent consumer from exploitation in the market. The present study is initiated to determine the local consumer awareness on the consumer rights and protection act; it is still a common practice that businessmen exploit the consumer with regard to quality, quantity, weight, price and the related factor involved in the daily business transaction. Ignorance is one of the prominent factors contributing in the exploitation of rural masses.

Keywords: consumer, exploitation, consumer rights, consumer protection act

1. Introduction

The term consumer refers to that consumer display in searching, for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of product and service that they expect will satisfy their needs. The study of the consumer behavior is the study of how the individual make decision to spend their available resource (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. It include the study what they buy, why they buy, when they buy, where they buy, how buy and how often they use it. One of the most important constant among all of us, despite the difference is that the consumer use or consume on regular basis food, clothing, shelter, transportation, Education, equipment, vacation, necessities luxuries service. Consumer plays a vital role in the health of the economy – local, national and international (Nagaraja, 2004)^[8].

In India, National Consumer Day is observed on 24th December with specific themes as the Consumer Protection Act commenced on that day in the year 1986. The main aim of this act is to protect the interest of the consumer in India and provide redressal to grievances of the consumers and thereby aid fair trade practices. (Sybms, 2019)^[11].

1.1 Forms of consumer exploitation

Some of the common methods adopted by the manufacturers and traders to exploit the consumer are as follows:

1. Underweight or under-measurement 2. Goods or services of substandard quality 3. Over pricing 4. Articles harmful for health 5. Unsatisfactory after-sales services 6. Sale not in accordance with predetermined conditions 7. Scarcity in service sector. 8. Rough behavior with the consumer and undue conditions 9. Cheating in choice 10. Faulty equipment 11. Artificial scarcity 12. Incomplete or insufficient information. (Singh, 2015)^[9].

1.2 Factors causing exploitation of consumers

Reasons or factors causing exploitation of consumers are: (1) Limited information (2) Limited supplies (3) Limited competition (4) Low literacy (5) Lack of bargaining power (6) Irregular prices offered (7) Misleading advertisements (8) Lack of unity and (9) Cumbersome and time taking legal proceedings. (Chiru, 2018)^[4].

1.3 Solution to consumer problems

Always conducting market survey and tap all the sources of information before buying a products.

Obtain bills, receipts and guarantee cards for all purchases made and keep them safely. If you notice any trade cheating or using unfair trade practices do not remain quiet. Report such cases

to the concerned authorities. (Biggermann, 2013) [3]. Do not accept irregular weights like bricks and stones. Be alert and vigilant about the weights and measures and the procedure used by the seller.

Read labels carefully for brand names, ingredients net weight, MRP, expiry date and standardization mark like ISI, Hallmark, Eco Mark, FPO, Wool Mark (Gupta, 2011) [5].

1.4 Consumer Rights

Right to safety, right to be informed, right to be choose, right to be heard, right to redressal, right to consumer education.

Knowledge of these rights will help us to protect ourselves against the various unfair practices of trades. (Sureshlal, 2016) [10].

1.5 Rise of consumer awareness

Consumer awareness means awareness of consumers in different aspects of consumption activities. Consumer awareness is a broader and wider concept. It covers the followings:

- Consumer awareness about Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
- Consumer awareness about Fair Price Shop.
- Consumer awareness about price, quality and expiry date of the product.
- Consumer awareness about their rights and duties.
- Consumer awareness about certified products like ISI, Agmark, ISO-2000 (Ishak, 2012) [7].

Consumers have to be aware not only of the commercial aspects of sale and purchase of goods but also of the health and security aspect. Besides this, they should be aware of their rights and duties being as rational human beings viz., price and quality of products used by them, about Fair Price Shops, standardization of products, about Consumer Forums etc. Therefore, Consumer exploitation should be bought down with proper awareness to the consumers on their rights and how they could go about with things, if they feel they have been cheated. (Agarwal, 2009) [1].

1.6 Consumer exploitation in standard form contracts

A standard form contract—or contract of adhesion—is the most prevalent type of contract that consumers enter. Consumers routinely enter such contracts, which govern most business-to-consumer relationships. Consumers presumably accept the terms and conditions of multiple standard form contracts whenever they purchase, rent, subscribe, or otherwise use a product or a service a business offers.

Legislators, policymakers, courts, lawyers, and legal scholars have long been concerned about consumer standard form contracts. They recognized that these contracts—mostly offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis—are prone to be one-sided and undermine consumers' rights and interests. This imbalance is especially pronounced over non-negotiable and non-salient terms, which consumers do not read, understand, or factor into their decision-making. (Becher, 2021) [2].

1.7 The consumer protection Act

“An Act to provide for better protection of the interests of consumers and for that purpose to make provision for the establishment of consumer councils and other authorities for the settlement of consumers' disputes and for matters connected therewith.” (According to Consumer Protection Act, 1986). (Himachalm, 2006) [6].

- Consumer Protection Act, 1986 seeks to promote and protect the interest of consumers against deficiencies and defects in goods or services. It also seeks to secure the rights of a consumer against unfair or restrictive trade practices. This act was passed in Lok Sabha on 9th December, 1986 and R

Ajya Sabha on 10th December, 1986 and assented by the President of India on 24th December, 1986 and was published in the Gazette of India on 26th December, 1986. (Gupta, 2011) [5].

2. Methodology

The study is exclusively based on the secondary data. The researcher has collected the relevant data from various articles and research papers.

3. Conclusion and Suggestions

The conclusion obtained is that there is a need for consumers to voice out against any kind of exploitation in order to contribute towards a progressive nation. Also, our country needs to take measures to spread awareness of consumer rights among all age groups by organizing consumer awareness campaigns thereby safeguarding rights of the consumers and eradicating exploitation. This research paper can be helpful to study the need of awareness of consumer rights in India and also to implement strategies and methodologies to empower consumers against their exploitation.

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