



CONSUMER RIGHTS AWARENESS AMONG COMMERCE STUDENTS AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

The consumer is a vital segment of any business. Consumer rights awareness is necessary for Commerce students at the higher secondary level. Making consumers aware of rights is essential so that buyers can take the exact decision and right consumer choice. In the present study, the investigator tries to examine the various aspects related to the awareness of Consumer rights based on gender and locale among a sample of 400 commerce students in higher secondary schools from the Thrissur district. The investigator developed a Consumer rights awareness test for collecting responses and the statistical techniques include percentage analysis and t-test for analyzing the data. The results show that the level of consumer rights awareness among commerce students in higher secondary schools is moderate.

Keywords: Consumer Rights, Consumer Education.

INTRODUCTION

The consumer is a vital aspect of any commercial enterprise. Consumer satisfaction will assist not only businesses but government and humanity as well. Consumerism is a joint realization on the part of consumers, business, government, and civil society to enhance consumer satisfaction and social welfare which will in turn support all of them to make a consumer-friendly economic society. Consumer empowerment boosts the capability of consumers to exercise informed choices, recompense good sellers and manufacturers, and pursue redressal for poor standards. Consumer empowerment supports efficient economic growth. Consumer choice impacts and in turn is impacted by every economic decision whether taken by an individual or a group of people. The consumer is archetypal in every section of society with no distinction of class, caste, gender, profession, business, service, etc. In business, consumers are the king and keep it in existence. The manufacturers produce goods based on the tastes, likings, preferences of the consumers. The consumer is the pivotal aspect around which business activities orbits. Despite the great importance of consumers, they may be the victims of fraudulent practices of businessmen. An important aspect is that there is a dearth of knowledge in consumers and they are not systematized. The consumer may be a victim of unfair trade practices such as adulteration, misleading advertising, non-compliance of standards, and deficiency in services that violate consumer protection laws. To protect the consumers from unscrupulous businessmen and to offer remedies for their complaints, the Consumer Protection Act was passed in the year 1986. The objective of this study is to realize Consumer Rights Awareness among higher secondary students. Consumer education has exactly been called the opening through which all the consumer rights can be secured.

CONSUMER RIGHTS: AN OVERVIEW

The Consumer Protection Act aims to safeguard the rights of the consumers by establishing authorities for sensible and dynamic administration and settlement of consumers' disputes. The Consumer Protection Act (CPA) states the basic rights of consumers as

1. **Right to Safety** - It is the consumer's right to be protected against goods and services which is harmful to wellbeing or life.
2. **Right to be Informed**- Consumer Protection Act guarantees the right to be informed about the quality, quantity, purity, standard, and price of goods he consumes from the market. So, the producer must give adequate information about the product, its ingredients, date of manufacture, price, and measures to safeguard in the label and package of the product
3. **Right to Choose** - The consumer should be assured of freedom to choose from a variety of products at competitive prices on his free will to satisfy his needs.
4. **Right to be Heard** - The consumer has the right to register dissatisfaction with any product and get his complaint heard and take appropriate steps to redress their grievances.
5. **Right to Seek Redressal** - It is the right to receive redressal for any defect in goods or unfair trade. If the quality and performance of a product fall short of the seller's claims, the consumer has a right that the product must be repaired, replaced, or withdrawn by the seller.
6. **Right to Consumer Education** - It means the right of acquiring knowledge and being a well-informed consumer throughout his life, aware of his rights and the remedies.



To safeguard the consumers from exploitation, there are numerous consumer protection regulations like consumer dispute redressal agencies, the consumer protection courts, the Consumer Protection Act of 1986, and so on. Along with knowing these consumer protection platforms, every consumer must be aware of the market. Consumers should also be acquainted with their consumer rights and redressal platforms that they can seek. The necessity for consumer protection is due to reasons such as;

- ✓ Consumers need physical protection against products and services that are forged, unsafe, and endanger the health
- ✓ Consumers need protection against deceiving and unfair trade practices
- ✓ Consumers need protection against the exploitation of monopolies and restrictive trade practices.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the pace of change mounting every year, each marketer has to continually invest time and energy to upskill and learn. The market that we experience today is a transformed and fast-changing market. If we want to withstand in the present-day market, looking at the countless volume and variety of products and services produced, purchased, and consumed, one must be aware of the consumer protection Act. Consumer protection has a significant role in the political, economic, and social outlines. In India, the Government has taken many steps to protect consumers by creating awareness about the Consumer Protection Act. The Government has attempted continuously to safeguard consumers' interests through legislation and the Consumer Protection Act 1986 is considered as the most progressive statute for consumer protection. Consumer Awareness is necessary for Commerce students at a higher secondary level to ensure that every consumer is cognizant of consumers' rights. Making consumers aware or consumer education is essential so that buyers can take the exact decision and right choice. In the present study, the investigator tries to examine the various aspects related to the awareness of consumer rights among students which is entitled as 'Consumer rights awareness among commerce students at the higher secondary level'.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study Consumer Rights awareness among commerce students in higher secondary schools.
2. To find out the difference in Consumer Rights awareness among commerce students based on gender.
3. To examine the difference in Consumer Rights awareness among commerce students based on locale.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in Consumer Rights awareness among boys and girls' commerce students in higher secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference in Consumer Rights awareness among urban and rural commerce students in higher secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology refers to the way the study has to be conducted, it deals with the detailed description of the method adopted samples, tools, and statistical techniques for the study. For the present study, a representative sample of 400 commerce students in higher secondary schools from the Thrissur district was selected. Awareness test was used as a tool for checking the awareness about consumer rights among commerce students in higher secondary schools. Percentage analysis and Test of significance of the difference between means (t-test) were used to analyze the data

A) Consumer Rights awareness Among Commerce Students at Higher Secondary level

Table :1 Level of Consumer Rights awareness Among Commerce Students at Higher Secondary level

Extend of awareness	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	79	20
Average	261	65
Low	60	15
Total	400	100

From the above table, it is evident that 20 % of the total sample have a higher level of Consumer Rights awareness, 65% possess an average level of Consumer Rights awareness, and 15% fall at a low level.

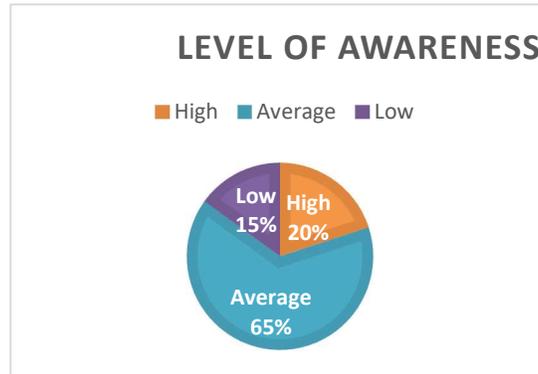


Fig:1 Level of Consumer Rights awareness Among Commerce Students at Higher Secondary level

Test of Significant Difference Between Mean Scores of Consumer Rights awareness for the Subsamples

B) Analysis of significant difference between the mean score of Consumer Rights awareness among the subsamples based on gender. The mean and standard deviation of the boys and girls for the variable awareness were subjected to t-test and results were studied.

Table 2: Result of t-test Between Mean Scores of Consumer Rights awareness based on Gender

Sample	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Boys	200	114.9	19.07	1.12	Not significant
Girls	200	112.1	29.96		

Table 2 shows that the t-value for boys and girls is 1.12. The table values of 't' at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance are 1.96 and 2.58 respectively. Since the calculated t value is less than the table value; it can be interpreted that there exists no significant difference in awareness between boys' and girls' samples, which shows that the awareness for boys and girls is the same.



Fig:2 Graphical representation of Mean Scores of Consumer Rights awareness based on Gender

C) Analysis of significant difference between the mean score of Consumer Rights awareness among the subsamples based on locale

The mean and standard deviation of the subsamples based on locale were subjected to t-test and results were studied.

Table: 3 Result of t-test Between Mean Scores of Consumer Rights awareness among the subsamples based on locale

Sample	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of significance
Urban	193	16.663	4.79	0.415	Not significant
Rural	207	16.463	4.80		

Table 3 shows that the t value for Consumer Rights awareness among the subsamples based on locale urban and rural is 0.415. The table value of 't' at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance are 1.96 and 2.58 respectively. Since the calculated t-value is less than the table



value; it can be interpreted that there exists no significant difference in awareness between urban and rural subsample, which shows that the awareness for urban and rural are the same



Fig 3 Graphical representation of mean scores of Consumer Rights awareness among commerce students based on locale

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The results of the study have been interpreted to evolve some findings as follows.

- ✓ The level of Consumer Rights awareness among commerce students in higher secondary schools is moderate.
- ✓ The t-value obtained by comparing the mean scores of Consumer Rights awareness among boys and girls was found to be 1.12 which was statistically not significant at 0.05 level. It can be interpreted that there is no significant difference in awareness of boys and girls' samples.
- ✓ While comparing the total mean score of Consumer Rights awareness among urban and rural students, the t value was 0.415, which is not significant at 0.05level. It can be interpreted that there is no significant difference in awareness among urban and rural samples.

Based on the results obtained from the present study the following suggestions are made which will be helpful to improve the awareness about Consumer Rights among commerce students in higher secondary schools. Provide opportunities for students to get involved in making a set of classroom rules and responsibilities as an effective way to start teaching for awareness about the Consumer Protection Act. Teachers and other interested parties should encourage the formation of consumer youth clubs in schools to provide leadership opportunities. Consumer education corners exhibiting enlightenment materials should be formed in school libraries. Provide Consumer education to edify students and train them about their rights and make them more accountable to their own purchase decisions and consumption of products.

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