

Consumer awareness

Science



Definition Consumer awareness is making the consumer aware of His/Her rights. Consumer awareness is a marketing term. It means that consumers note or are aware of products or services, its characteristics and the other marketing P's (place to buy, price, and promotion). Usually commercials and ads increase consumer awareness, as well as "word of mouth" (a comment from someone you know about a product or service). 1 Need : we need it so we will not be misled by producers, it explains if what we buy is worth our money.. and not harmful to us and to environment. Many people are ignorant of their rights to get protected against the exploitation by so many others. So when there is a forum for such redress of grievances there seems to be no such exploitation by many; and becomes a rare one. So in order to get a clear picture of the level of exploitation of consumers, the awareness is required.

2. Role of producers proper labeling, full information, health warnings, handling information, expiration date, etc. keep to requirements, norms, standards label products according requirements, providing true facts They have to produce and deliver the goods/services of right quality at right price at right time at right place at right quantity with right fact if they are providing a service they should carry it out with due skill and care. They must also make sure that any materials they provide as part of this service are fit for the purpose. It is also illegal for a supplier to cut off, or threaten to cut off, supply to a reseller (wholesale or retail) because they have been discounting goods or advertising discounts below prices set by the supplier.

Some of the common methods of exploitation are

1. Under weight and under measurements –not measured or weighed correctly
2. Substandard Quality –defective home appliances and medicines beyond expirydate
3. High prices—charging above the retail price
4. Duplicate Articles—selling fake items in the name of the original
5. Adulteration and Impurity—is done to get higher profits
6. Lack of safety Devices—absence of inbuilt safe guards in appliances
7. Artificial Scarcity—hoarding and black marketing
8. False and Incomplete Information—misleading information on quality, durability, and safety.
9. Unsatisfactory after sales Service—high cost items like electronics and carsrequire constant and regular service.
10. Rough behavior and Undue conditions—harassment in getting LPG connection or a telephone connection..

Factors causing exploitation of Consumers.

1. Limited Information—providing full and correct information will help in thechoice
2. Limited Supplies—when goods and services are in short supply then price shootsup
3. Limited Competition. —single producer may manipulate the market in terms of price and stocks.
4. Low Literacy. —illiteracy leads to exploitation.

Hence Consumer Awareness isessential. Rise of consumer Awareness

Kautilya was one of the earliest to write in his Arthashastra about the need for Consumer awareness and protection. With the growth of private sector there is a greater need for discipline and regulation of the market. Consumers must be aware of the sale and purchase of goods, the health and security aspects also. Ensuring the safety offooditemssold in the market is essential these days. Legal measures for consumer safety and consumer

awareness must be uniform, and transparent in terms of prices, quality of goods, and stocks.

Consumers must have the tools to combat malpractices and protect their rights. Rights and Duties of Consumers As codified under the Indian Laws the Consumers have the following Rights

1. Right to Safety—to protect against hazardous goods
2. Right to be Informed—about price, quality, purity
3. Right to Choose—access to a variety of goods and services at competitive prices.
4. Right to be Heard—consumers interest and welfare must be taken care of
5. Right to seek Redressal—protection against unfair trade practices and settling genuine grievances.
6. Right to Consumer Education. Knowledge about goods and issues related to consumers.

Duties

1. Get a bill for every important purchase and also the Warranty card
2. Check the ISI mark or Agmark on the goods
3. Form consumer awareness groups
4. Make a complaint on genuine grievances.
5. Consumers must know to exercise their rights.

Consumer protection Measure

1. Legislation concerning Consumer Rights. The Consumer Protection Act 1986 provides for consumer disputes redressal at the state and national level. With the help of this law the agencies can solve grievances in a speedy, simple and inexpensive manner.

A separate department of consumer affairs was set up at the state and central government. A three tier system of consumer courts at the National, State and District levels were set up. These agencies have done good work by handling lakhs of cases.

2. Public Distribution System . To protect the poor from price rise and black marketing the government food security to the poor by supplying essentials through the ration or Fair price

shops. 3. Standardisation of Products . These are done to assure the quality of products.

The ISI stamp on goods is placed by the Bureau of Indian standards. This caters to industrial and consumer goods. These goods can be trusted to confirm to specific standards. Agmark is meant for Agricultural products. At the International level the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) located in Geneva sets common standards. The FAO and WHO provide food standards. 4. Legal formalities for filing a complaint . The complaint can be written on plain paper. The supporting documents like the warranty card must be attached. A lawyer is not required. We can argue our case