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## **LEVEL OF AWARENESS REGARDING CONSUMER PROTECTION AMONG UNDER GRADUATE STUDENTS OF RURAL BACKGROUND OF KURUKSHETRA DISTRICT**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Consumers are the center of all economic activities. In a layman's language, every human being who consumes anything for survival is a consumer. The consumer protection Act, 1986 also treat those as consumer who do not purchase but consume the goods/services to satisfy their needs.

For strengthening consumers voice, there must be joint responsibility of the central and state govt. departments, consumer councils, voluntary organizations and consumer themselves (Chandra, 2011) Keeping in view the above facts, present study is undertaken to study about the awareness levels regarding consumer protection among would be responsible citizens of the society.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY**

To carried out the present study a sample of 152 students were selected randomly from different colleges of nearby areas of Kurukshetra district. Out of these 73 respondents were having rural background. For data collation regarding the present study a pretested and self structured questionnaire was prepared. About 23 questions, were framed to see the eneral awareness regarding consumer rights and protection act under these categories i.e. awareness before purchasing, awareness during purchasing, awareness after purchasing for data collection, research techniques like interview scheduled was followed. It was ensured that questions must be duly filled by the respondents in the presence of the investigator. Any ambiguity and any doubt regarding questions

in the questionnaire was resolved and explained in the local language on the spot by the researcher. The question were resolved, on the spot by the researcher.

### RESULT & DISCUSSION

Data related to awareness before purchasing showed that (Table 1) more than 70% of the respondents were having knowledge about what consumer protection is (73%) and rights of consumer (73%) what is ISI and Agmark is (74%). Eighty one percent of the respondent took note of ISI marks on the product before purchasing. On the contrary only forty-four percent heard the name of BIS.

**TABLE 1: AWARENESS BEFORE PURCHASING THE GOODS FROM THE MARKET**

	Question Asked	Rural Subjects		
			N	%age
1.	What is C.P.A.	Yes	53	70
		No	20	27
2.	Right of Consumer under CPA	Yes	53	73
		No	20	27
3.	What is ISI	Yes	54	74
		No	19	26
4.	What is Bureau of Indian Standard	Yes	32	44
		No	41	56
5.	If mark of ISI/BIS have been looked into	Yes	59	81
		No	14	19
6.	Heard about Agmark	Yes	55	75
		No	18	25

According to Table-2, Max student (74-90%) were having awareness about quality of commodities weights used by the shopkeepers. manufacturing and expiry date of the products, getting receipt of after purchasing, after sale services and about guarantee / warrantee period etc.

**TABLE 2: AWARENESS DURING PURCHASING THE GOODS FROM THE MARKET**

	Question Asked	Rural Subjects		
			N	%age
1	Awareness about quality of various commodities	Yes	54	74
		No	19	26

2	Awareness about standardization of weight used by shopkeeper	Yes	60	82
		No	13	18
3	Right of getting free repairing after sales service during guarantee/warranty period	Yes	65	89
		No	08	11
4	The manufacturing & expiry date of the commodities printed in the sealed products	Yes	68	93
		No	05	7
5	Awareness regarding getting receipt of purchased goods from shopkeeper	Yes	60	82
		No	13	18
6	Check the expiry date while buying the product	Yes	71	97
		No	02	03
7	Do you demand the purchasing receipt from shopkeeper	Yes	65	89
		No	08	11

After purchasing awareness (Table 3) a no. of questions were asked about consumer rights to complaint against the problems faced after purchasing, likes right of consumer under CPA, if not getting benefit of guarantee & warrantee period, if shopkeeper sells expired commodity and if there is a difference between prize charged by the shopkeeper and the printed rate of the product.

It has been observed that maximum respondents ranging from (44-89%) were aware of all irregularities usually performed by the shopkeepers. But only fifty two percent have the knowledge of how and where to lodge a complaint. Sewanand (2012) and Kishtwaria et.al. (2016) also reported that general awareness regarding consumer protection rights was found good among rural respondents.

**TABLE 3: AWARENESS AFTER PURCHASING THE GOODS FROM THE MARKET**

1	Information about the office of district consumer affairs in your city.	Yes	50	68
		No	23	32
2	Knowledge about the right to complaint against the defects on the standard quality of product.	Yes	64	88
		No	09	12
3	Are you aware of the right you have if use of items affect you adversely	Yes	50	68
		No	23	32
4	How to lodge your complaint in consumer forum	Yes	38	52
		No	35	48
5	Right under CPA if you are not getting benefit of during awareness warranty period.	Yes	43	58
		No	30	42
6	Where to complains if shopkeeper sells the expired commodities	Yes	45	62
		No	28	38
7	Complaints if the shopkeepers don't use standardized weight	Yes	32	44
		No	41	56
8	Complaint if the seal of the product is broken	Yes	45	61
		No	28	39
9	Complain if you find difference between the prize charged by the shopkeeper and the prize pointed on the product.	Yes	63	56
		No	10	14

## CONCLUSION

After analysing the data it has been deduced that consumer awareness in India is growing day by day. This may be due to the selfless efforts made by consumer association and government legislation to safeguard the interest of consumers. Creating awareness among consumers of all walks of life through advertisements, use of mass media and short films in local language to educate about consumer interest and rights. It is also suggested that for rural undergraduate, education regarding consumers Protection Act, about consumer forum and how to lodge complaint in easier way should be included in their curriculum. It has also been observed that time to time education can be provided by organizing seminar & conferences. It has been suggested that each and every consumer must acknowledge time to time and educate

himself/ herself about him/her rights and responsibilities. For this, parents & teachers should come forward for this noble cause.

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