

Consumer Awareness: Role of Print Media in Present Scenario

Rupanagudi Unesha Fareq* and Rupanagudi Beena Fareq²

*PhD Scholar, Department of Family Resource Management, College of Home Science, GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand.

²PhD Scholar, Department of Apparel and Textile Sciences, College of Community Science, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka.

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The modern era can be called as e consumer era. The term consumer refers to any person who purchases or uses goods or services in any form. The consumer is the focal point influencing market functioning and should be aware of consumer rights that, if violated by sellers not ready to tolerate in any circumstances. Consumers must be aware of the commercial aspects of the sale and purchase of goods as well as the product in health and safety aspect. In India, Consumer exploitation is increasing day by day and this can be reduced by educating customers about their rights and how to proceed if they have been misled in any way. Media is the most effective means of reaching a large number of people in a short period of time. By making effective use of various columns and news forms, print media, particularly newspapers, can provide a lot of publicity and information to consumer awareness activities.

Introduction

Consumer awareness refers to consumers understanding of products or services, as well as their rights as consumers. As consumer awareness grows, the consumer may become acquainted with how to use a product or service, the benefits or drawbacks of a specific product or service, or product. This awareness can be largely generated by the media, through advertising and news stories, articles etc.

The current era is known as the digital age which has made trade and commerce transactions easier and more popular because the advancement of electronic communication introducing new dimensions, resulting in expanded economic potential through direct connectivity between different countries crossing borders. The importance of consumer education is highlighted as consumers are viewed as a part of the economy. The circular flow of money from consumers back to consumers is the base of the economy. Consumer



awareness is directly related to education and economic status. It was discovered that consumer awareness of household goods was reflected in their purchasing knowledge and awareness of consumer protection, label awareness, the effect of advertisement and standardized mark. Every country has provided legal acts with regard to consumer interests to protect consumers against exploitation. The Consumer Protection Act of 1986 in India is one of the examples that will be remembered as a defining moment in the history of socioeconomic legislation in India to protect the interests and rights of consumers.

Malpractices against consumers have increased dramatically as technology has advanced. Several steps have been taken at the central and state levels, but much remains to be done in creating consumer awareness and there is a lack of knowledge about the consumer rights as large proportion of Indian consumers are poor, illiterate, ignorant, misled, and unorganized in consumer market. Even majority of educated people are also unaware of their consumer rights and how to protect themselves from exploitation.

Role of Media in consumer Awareness

The Indian media has always been responsive in performing its duties so that those involved in policymaking and other matters can do their jobs properly. The media has played a significant role in promoting consumer movement throughout the world since times. Clarity of thought, ease of access, and a higher level of trustworthiness are the reasons why media has stepped forward in the consumer movement.

Mass media is the most effective means of reaching a large number of people in a short period of time..Electronic media has more impression on society as comparable to print media because of its visual aid of information. It has become a silent opinion maker, and thus operates on a larger scale than any other institution.

In the present and past, the media has taken on the task of educating consumers and combating consumer exploitation. The Indian press has always expressed solidarity with the country's socioeconomic problems. The media, journalists, and people have made a significant contribution to bringing to light major issues of social concern.

Print media: Consumer awareness

By making effective use of various columns and news forms, print media, particularly newspapers, can provide a lot of publicity to consumer movement



activities. Consumer news is typically reported in the newspapers in the following formats.

The publication of a weekly column on consumer issues has now become a standard practice in newspapers. This column addresses consumer issues, rights, and duties, as well as how consumers can effectively exercise their rights. Some newspapers cover major case events and major consumer seller disputes. Many newspapers educate consumers by exposing false claims in advertisements, the worthlessness of sales and bazaars and other sales gimmicks. Marketers frequently target rural customers, women, and children as they are easily misled and have limited information.

Some newspapers have launched campaigns to protect these customers by publishing special news items or introducing special columns. The profiles of consumer activists, their commendable jobs, and how consumers associations help consumers in specific regions are among the issues highlighted.

Different columns in newspaper emphasizing consumer matters

Editorials

Through their editorial columns, many newspapers frequently express their views on society in general. Typically, these points of view represent a general opinion about how a government policy, decision, or verdict has been accepted by society. Sometimes these editorials offer suggestions / recommendations on steps to be taken to resolve consumer agonies and to deal with consumer sufferings.



News story

A news story is a popular term for news reports, particularly narrative ones. It is frequently used to distinguish a fact-based article from an editorial or opinion piece. Some newspapers frequently publish stories about consumer interests or grievances, or about major incidents involving consumer problems. Such news stories are typically created after assessing an event's newsworthiness.



The Consumer Column

A number of newspapers publish exclusive weekly or biweekly column on consumer-related topics. Because it contains news and articles of common interest, this column attracts readers as consumers. Consumers are drawn to this column because it accurately expresses a variety of problems and sufferings.



Letters to Editors

Newspapers are preferred by consumers, consumer activists, and many other concerned citizens. Letters to editors is the best platform for this purpose. Opinions of consumers on certain important issues, their grievances, and suggestions to public authorities frequently appear in the column attracting readers.



Conclusion

The media is a platform where everyone can come together and express their views, whether they are similar or divergent, without having to be a follower of any particular ideology or school of thought. The media allows for diversity of opinion while also remaining focused on a single ideology. Grievances of various parties, dimensions of various problems, arguments and counter-arguments on a specific issue can rightfully be reflected by media alone. The media raises consumer awareness about the laws that are available to them and their role in the market. Consumers are made aware of consumer laws through print media as well as electronic media. More consumer education and actions by the government, consumer activists, and role of media are most needed to make the consumer protection a success in the country.