



ISSN Print: 2394-7500  
ISSN Online: 2394-5869  
Impact Factor: 5.2  
IJAR 2017; 3(8): 184-186  
[www.allresearchjournal.com](http://www.allresearchjournal.com)  
Received: 05-06-2017  
Accepted: 11-07-2017

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## **A critical study of consumer awareness of consumer rights and their implementation with special reference to Uttarakhand**

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### **Abstract**

Under the modern concept of marketing, the consumer is regarded as the king and the business is expected to provide maximum possible satisfaction to him, but in reality the king is misguided and exploited by his kingdom and needs social and legal protection. This infact is the biggest paradox of modern times. This paper aims to analyse consumer awareness towards Consumer Protection Act 1986, in the state of Uttarakhand. The study proves that people in the hilly areas of the state have low level of consumer awareness and are not much informed about the rights guaranteed to them and the remedies available to them under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

**Keywords:** Consumer awareness, consumer rights, consumer protection act 1986

### **Introduction**

Consumers particularly in India are unorganized and relatively uninformed. On the other hand, the traders and business are organised and well informed. Unscrupulous businessman take this advantage and exploit the consumers especially the uneducated ones in a variety of ways. Misleading advertisements, unsafe products, overcharging, under weighing and other unethical and restrictive trade practices are performed by dishonest and greedy businessmen to cheat and dupe the innocent consumers. Consumer awareness and consumer protection are the need of the hour.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To determine the level of consumer awareness on Consumer Rights.
2. To find out the perception of the consumers towards implementation of their rights in case of violation in the hands of unscrupulous business.

### **Methodology of the study**

**Sampling design:** Simple random sampling method has been adopted, the respondent being selected range from the total population.

**Sample size :** The sample size under this study is 100 respondents.

**Nature of the study:** Descriptive type of research is used. Descriptive research describes the state of affairs as it exist at present. The required data for the study collected from the primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected from 100 sample respondents with the help of well structured questionnaire, which is pre-tested. Secondary data has been obtained from the journals, books, websites and published data relating to consumer education, consumer protection and consumer guidance of consumer research agencies, civil supply department and department of consumer affairs.

**Statistical tools:** Simple percentage analysis and chi square analysis have been practiced to analyse and interpret respondents awareness level towards consumer rights.

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**Analysis and interpretation**

**Table 1:** Awareness about goods which are hazardous to life and property.

Level of Awareness	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Exceptionally High	10	10
High	22	22
Indifferent	32	32
Low	25	25
Exceptionally Low	11	11
Total	100	100

**Interpretation**

The above table shows that 32% i.e., less than half of the respondents had indifferent perception towards knowledge regarding hazardous goods and services.

**Table 2:** Awareness about quality, potency, purity, standard and price of the goods.

Level of awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage
Exceptionally high	07	07
High	20	20
Indifferent	55	55
Low	14	14
Exceptionally Low	4	4
Total	100	100

**Interpretation**

It is evident from the above table, that more than half i.e. 55% of the respondents were indifferent towards knowing the quality, quantity, purity, standard and price of the goods they purchased as intend to purchase.

**Table 3:** Awareness regarding access to a variety of goods at competitive prices

Level of awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage
Exceptionally high	11	11
High	19	19
Indifferent	44	44
Low	09	09
Exceptionally Low	17	17
Total	100	100

**Interpretation**

The above table reveals that nearly half of the respondents i.e. 44% had neutral knowledge regarding free choice of goods and services. Moreover, 17% of the respondents had very low knowledge about it.

**Table 4:** Awareness regarding registering his/her dissatisfaction at appropriate forums.

Level of awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage
Exceptionally high	06	06
High	12	12
Indifferent	45	45
Low	09	09
Exceptionally Low	28	28
Total	100	100

**Interpretation**

It is evident that nearly half of the respondents i.e., 45% had neutral knowledge regarding the right to be heard. Moreover, 28% of the respondents had very little knowledge

regarding the right to make protests and to representation in the government and in other policy making bodies.

**Table 5:** Awareness regarding healthy environment

Level of awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage
Exceptionally high	12	12
High	18	18
Indifferent	34	34
Low	26	26
Exceptionally Low	10	10
Total	100	100

**Interpretation**

The above table indicates that 34% i.e., nearly 1/3 of the respondents had indifferent perception towards right to healthy environment and 26% had low knowledge of it. It can be concluded that 60% of the respondents were indifferent or nearly neutral towards awareness regarding healthy environment.

**Findings of the study**

This study shows that majority of the respondents were indifferent or showed very low level of awareness regarding utilization of consumer rights. A very small percentage of respondents were aware of consumer rights but even they never registered a complaint regarding exploitation.

The situation in hilly areas of Uttarakhand is all the more dismal. Due to illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and lack of development infrastructure the hilly people of Uttarakhand are just not aware of their rights as consumers and when cheated or exploited in the hands of unscrupulous and dishonest businessmen accept it either as an act of god or their fate.

**Conclusion**

The consumer awareness and protection in India is still in its infancy stage. Illiteracy to ignorance and lack of unity among consumers are the main reasons responsible for the dismal plight of the Indian consumers. The consumer being the citizen of the state and country our entitled to be protected from the illegal business practices, but due to lack of awareness of voice on the part of consumer and consumer associations, comprising attitude of the consumers, wide spread corruption and violation of consumer rights, this is not possible.

The government has enacted several laws to protect the rights of the consumers and is taking every possible measures to expand consumer awareness and encourage consumer participation in government and in other policy making bodies. To name a few, 'Jago Grahak Jago' is a consumer awareness programme launched in 2005 by the department of Consumer Affairs Department under the govt. of India. Due to this many ongoing malpractices were put to an end and good quality products were delivered to the consumers. But above all without public participation the government alone cannot protect consumers from malpractices and dishonesty. There are many laws to take care of the consumers and more are coming up as per the requirements. However, its effectiveness and execution much depends upon the alertness of the consumers and there sincerity.

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