



## **PUBLIC AWARENESS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT: A CASE STUDY OF CONSUMERS AWARENESS IN ANANTAPURAM DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

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### **Abstract**

*The word 'customer' is the foundation of any business organizations success. One of the primary goals of any marketing strategy should be to identify and meet the needs of the consumer. Considering customer importance at all stages of the marketing process helps your company to ensure greater customer satisfaction and increase its long-term goal of repeat business. The consumers yet it became necessary to protect the consumers from the exploitation and to save them from adulterated and sub-standard goods and services and to safe guard the interests of the consumers. In order to provide for better protection of the interests of the consumer the Consumer Protection Bill, 1986 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 5th December, 1986. Which provides easy access to justice, has brought a legal revolution to India as a result of its cost effective mechanisms and popular support. At the same time, these mechanisms pose a great legal challenge to the traditional courts which conduct litigation in orthodox ways. In this age of consumers, the regime of Indian consumer law will undoubtedly rule Indian markets and bestow a new phase on the existing Indian legal structure with its strong ancient legal foundations. The present research study attempts to know the opinions of respondents about the consumers Protection Act in Anantapuram district, Andhra Pradesh.*

### **Introduction**

The word 'customer' is the foundation of any business organizations success. One of the primary goals of any marketing strategy should be to identify and meet the needs of the consumer. Considering customer importance at all stages of the marketing process helps your company to ensure greater customer satisfaction and increase its long-term goal of repeat business. The industrial revolution and the development in the international trade and commerce has led to the vast expansion of business and trade, as a result of which a variety of consumer goods have appeared in the market to cater to the needs of the consumers and a host of services have been made available to the consumers. In spite of various provisions providing protection to the consumer and providing for stringent action against adulterated and sub-standard articles in the different enactments like Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Indian Contract Act, 1872, the Sale of Goods Act, 1930, the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976 and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, very little could be achieved in the field of Consumer Protection. Though the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 and the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 have provided relief to the consumers yet it became necessary to protect the consumers from the exploitation and to save them from adulterated and sub-standard goods and services and to safe guard the interests of the consumers. In order to provide for better protection of the interests of the consumer the Consumer Protection Bill, .1986 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 5th December, 1986.

### **Consumer Protection Act 1986**

The Consumer Protection Act of 1986, which provides easy access to justice, has brought a legal revolution to India as a result of its cost effective mechanisms and popular support. At the same time, these mechanisms pose a great legal challenge to the traditional courts which conduct litigation in orthodox ways. In this age of consumers, the regime of Indian consumer law will undoubtedly rule Indian markets and bestow a new phase on the existing Indian legal structure with its strong ancient legal foundations.

### **Objectives and Reasons of Consumer Protection Act**

The Consumer Protection Act 1986 seeks to provide for better protection of the interests of consumers and for the purpose, to make provision for the establishment of Consumer councils and other authorities for the settlement of consumer disputes and for matter connected therewith. It seeks to promote and protect the rights of consumers such as follows:

1. The right to be protected against marketing of goods which are hazardous to life and Property;



2. The right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices;
3. The right to be assured, wherever possible, access to an authority of goods at competitive prices;
4. The right to be heard and to be assured that consumers interests will receive due consideration at appropriate forums;
5. The right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers; and
6. Right to consumer education.
7. These objects are sought to be promoted and protected by the Consumer Protection Council to be established at the Central and State level.
8. To provide speedy and simple redressal to consumer disputes, a quasi-judicial machinery is sought to be setup at the district, State and Central levels. These quasi-judicial bodies will observe the principles of natural justice and have been empowered to give relief of a specific nature and to award, wherever appropriate, compensation to consumers. Penalties for noncompliance of the orders given by the quasi-judicial bodies have also been provided.
9. The Bill seeks to achieve the above objects.

### **Judicial Machinery at Three Levels**

- ❖ Consumer dispute redressal forum at the district level.
- ❖ Consumer dispute redressal commission at the State level.
- ❖ Consumer dispute redressal commission at the National level.

### **Process of Redressal**

- Decide to File
- Collect Necessary Documentation
- Send a Notice to the Company
- Get Legal Representation
- Prepare Your Complaint
- File your Complaint
- Attend the Admission Hearing
- Attend Subsequent Hearings till the Verdict
- After the Verdict

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To Study the Consumer Protect Act and its Legal framework in India.
2. To analyze the awareness levels of respondents about the Consumer Protection Act in Anantapuramu district.
3. To derive findings and offer suggestions.

### **Research Methodology**

The present research study attempts to know the opinions of respondents about the consumers Protection Act in Anantapuram district, Andhra Pradesh. The data needed for the study were collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data comprises the opinion gathered from the people through administering schedules. About hundred questionnaires were distributed on random sampling basis in all the wards of the district.

### **Review of Literature**

The review of literature comprises the various earlier studies in the research area as follows: Bhattacharjee and Sheel(2001) considered that to reveal the multidimensional ways by which consumers are deceived and deprived against established rights. They attempted to focus on some of the organizations to oversee the matter and some policy measures have been suggested to improve the situation. Rahman (1994) expressed the history of the consumer movement and the legal foundations for consumer protection in the society. Dr.K. Raju (2013)

Concluded that the Strong and effective consumer movement is the need of the hour. It should be the way of life for all the section of the society to be a being a real consumer. The Consumer protection act, 1986 will ensure consumerism in the country.

### Design of Sample

An integral component of research design is the sampling plan. It includes:

1. The sampling unit: The existing peoples in Anantapuramu distruict.
2. The Sample Size: One hundred in numbers.
3. Sampling procedure: Random sampling techniques were adopted.

### Tabulation and Analysis

The collected data were tabulated and presented through tables. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the data were analyzed with the help of simple techniques of statistical analysis such as average and percentages in order to interpret data and draw conclusions.

**Table: 1, Profile of the Respondents**

<b>1.Gender of the Respondents</b>		
Parameter	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	68	68.00
Female	32	32.00
Total	100	100.00
<b>2.Occupation of the Respondents</b>		
Agriculture	03	03.00
Business	29	29.00
Profession	62	62.00
Other specify	06	06.00
Total	100	100.00
<b>4. Income groups of Respondents</b>		
0-10,000	42	42.00
10,000-20,000	26	26.00
20,000-30,000	14	14.00
30,000-40,000	11	11.00
Above 40,000	7	7.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

Table: 1 represents that the 68 percent of the respondents were 'Male' and 32 per cent 'Female'. As per Occupation wise 62 per cent of the respondents were 'Profession Category', 29 per cent belongs to 'Business Category', 6 % of them from 'Other Category' and remaining only 3 per cent of them 'Agriculture' next Income group wise 42 % were 'Rs. Up to 10,000/-', 26 % in the group of 'Rs. 10,000 – 20.000/-', 14 per cent of them belonged 'Rs. 20,000 – 30.000/-', 11 per cent of them stated 'Rs. 30,000 – 40.000/-' and only 7 per cent of the Respondents stated 'Above Rs. 40.000.

**Table: 2, About Consumer Protection Act**

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Fully known	62	62.00
Partly known	29	29.00
Not known	9	09.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

Table 2 shows that large per cent (62) of respondents were know about Consumer Protection Act, 29 per cent of them stated partly know and the rest of 09 per cent of them did not know about the Consumer Protection Act.

**Table: 3, Type of Media influencing Consumer Protection Act**

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Electronic Media	23	23.00
News Papers	64	64.00
Others	13	13.00
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey.

It is evident that the table 3 represents that 64 per cent of the respondents were know about Consumer Protection Act through 'News Papers', 23 per cent of them came to know Consumer Protection Act through 'Electronic Media' and only 13 per cent of them from 'Other Sources'.

**Table: 4, Knowledge about Standards made by the Government (ISI, AGMARK, HALLMARK ETC.,)**

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Fully known	37	37.00
Partly known	29	29.00
Not known	34	34.00
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey.

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 37 per cent were have full knowledge about the Standards made by the Government, 29 per cent of the respondents were partly known and rest of 34 per cent of them did not have any knowledge about the Standards made by the Government.

**Table: 5, Aware of the Rights as a Consumer**

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Fully known	31	31.00
Partly known	22	22.00
Not known	47	47.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

31 per cent of the respondents were fully know the rights of Consumer, 22 per cent of them partly known and rest of them not know the rights of the Consumer.

**Table: 6, Aware of the Procedure to file a Case in the Consumer Courts**

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Fully known	14	14.00
Partly known	24	24.00
Not known	62	62.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey.

Table 6 represents that the 24 per cent of the respondents were have partly aware the procedure to file a Case in the Consumer Courts, 14 per cent of them fully known and remaining 62 per cent of the respondents they did not know the procedure to file a Case in the Consumer Courts.



### **Findings and Suggestions**

The researcher applied appropriate statistical tools to know the awareness level of consumer protection Act among the consumers. In this study the researcher presented a finding of the study, recommendation to the policy makers and conclusion also drawn. The awareness of Consumer Protection Act is moderate level among the respondents. The Knowledge about Standards made by the Government is moderate level. Awareness about Rights as a Consumer is very low. The procedure of file a Case in to the Consumer court very low per cent of them know. Most of the respondents are expressed that the Newspaper are the most important sources for creating consumer protection awareness. It is suggested that electronic media, social activists and educational institutions need to play an effective role in consumer awakening and imparting information regarding organizations working for the consumer's interest in their area. The Government has undertaken the necessary remedial actions for Promote general awareness of the rights of the consumer by encouraging consumer education and supplying the full fill information about the rights and responsibilities of consumers, through support the consumer activities to make stronger the existing institutional set up of consumer disputes redressal.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear from forgone analysis that the majority of peoples were not aware about consumer protection act, rights as a consumer and procedure to redressal processes the Government should undertake necessary steps to awake and educate to consumers through encouraging the consumer associations and several programmes, such as special workshops, Seminars, Short films etc.

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