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CONSUMER PROBLEMS AND AWARENESS AMONG THE HOSTEL GIRLS OF GADAG- BETAGERI

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ABSTRACT

Consumer awareness means having knowledge about the various consumer protection laws, redress mechanisms and the consumer rights, responsibilities which include right to protection of health and safety from goods and services that the each individual buy, right to be informed about the quality, price, quantity, purity and standard of good, right to choose the best from a variety of other options, right to get representation if there is any complaints of the particular goods /services, grievance or suggestion, and right to seek redress against unfair trade practice or other exploitation. Every consumer must be aware of his rights and responsibilities. In the present study, an attempt was made to find the awareness and problems faced by the hostel girls of Gadag-Betgeri. To collect the data, 100 sample respondents were selected random. The main objective of the study is to find out consumer awareness level among hostel girls of the study area and problems faced by the targeted group. The study reveals that most of the respondents face problems like shortage of weights and measurements while buying day today things like fruits and vegetables. And majority of the respondents are not aware of the grievance mechanisms like disputes which are solved in District, State and National Consumer Courts. This study concludes that consumer awareness means having the knowledge about the several consumer protection laws, rectified techniques, and consumer rights like the right to protection of health and safety from goods that the consumer purchases and also consumers have the right to be informed about the price, quality, quantity, standards of goods.

Key Words: Consumer, Rights, Responsibilities, Problems, Hostel Girls.

INTRODUCTION

A Consumer is a one who buys the goods and services. In the simple manner consumer is the end-user of the particular goods and services. But what if in case of goods and services bought are found to be in low quality or overcharged or shortage of quantity etc. In such cases the consumers, instead of getting satisfaction/happy, often feel bad/cheated by the sellers or manufacturer who have sold such type of goods and services. Here, consumer awareness plays a significant role among all especially teen agers.

Consumer awareness is nothing but an act of making sure that buyer or consumers are aware of the information about particular products, goods, services, and consumer's rights. Consumer awareness is very much important so that each buyer can make the good decision while selecting and make the right choice. In this article, we will discuss consumer awareness, consumer rights and redressal mechanisms in detail.

Consumer Rights:

Right to Safety

Right to safety is a basic right of a consumer which helps consumers to be protected against the marketing of such goods and services which are dangerous/hazardous to life and also for the property. Consumption of goods or services which are not up to the standardized mark will have adverse effects on the consumer's health and safety. In order to protect the consumer's interest/life, they have a right to receive good- quality and reliable goods.

Right to Be Informed

The consumer has a right to have information about the quality, quantity, strength, standard, and MRP of the goods or services. This will help him to make a good decision and prevent himself him/her from falling prey to high-pressure selling tactics. The right to information is used by consumers from false advertising, misleading labels, misbranding and packaging, high costs, etc.

Right to Choose

This right to choose is also a consumer right to choose among a wide variety of goods and services without being forced. It also includes the right to buy basic goods and services. The right to choose can be implemented to purchase better among the various market where a wide variety of goods and services are available at a competitive price.

Right to Be Heard

The rights are useless if there is no proper channel to listen to the consumer problems, grievances or disputes. If a buyer is dissatisfied with the product or service, then one has the right to file a complaint against it in a consumer court and it has to be addressed within a set time frame. For instance, if a consumer buys an electronic item and it starts malfunctioning, a consumer has all rights to take appropriate action by returning or replacing it.

Right to Seek Redressal

This right states that If a consumer is not satisfied with a particular purchase, he has the right to get the product replaced, or even he can demand a refund for the product. The consumer can even ask for compensation in case a goods or service causes harm to him/her or causes damaged to the property also.

Right to Customer Education

A consumer must be aware of his rights and responsibilities provided by the authorities regarding marketing practices. The consumer has the right to gain knowledge about his rights while buying goods and services. Lack of Consumer awareness leads to many problems/issues. So Government/GO's/NGO's take an action to create awareness among the people.

Responsibility of a Consumer:

The consumer has a some responsibility to be a good consumer who can bring changes in the society and would help others in creating awareness to fight against the unfair practices or be aware of it.

Following are some of the important responsibilities of a consumer which they should carry.

- Each consumer should know their rights under the consumer protection act and should practice the same in case of disputes.
- Each consumer should have correct knowledge about the product they are buying. They should act as a wisely while selecting the particular goods or services.
- A consumer can file a complaint if they have threat or faced a problem with such products or if the product they purchased is not up to the mark as they said.
- Each consumer should ask a cash memo while making a purchases.
- The consumer should verify the standard mark while they are buying like ISI, fssai, ECO or Hallmark, etc.

Consumer Awareness in India

The government of India has a huge campaign- "Jago Grahak Jago" is the most important and successful campaign which has focused the consumers against marketing malpractices, misleading brands and has successfully redressed consumer issues. The campaign Jago Grahak Jago was started by Government of India in 2005 by the Department of Consumer Affairs under Ministry of Consumer and Public Distributions.

"Jago Grahak Jago" means wake up consumer wake up, has now become very famous in almost every household. The Government of India uses many ways and channels in creating awareness among consumers. Following are the list channels used by the Government to meet the objectives of the "Jago Grahak Jago" Champaign.

- Media Advertisements
- Video Campaign
- Posters
- Printing
- Audio Campaigns
- Street Plays
- Documentaries

RESEARCH DESIGN

Gadag-Betgeri was selected after a careful examination of situations at different students who are staying in hostels of Gadag-Betgeri. Gadag-Betgeri is a hub for education and surrounded by many villages, students are coming to pursue their higher education.

OBJECTIVES:

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To know the consumer problems
2. To know about the awareness of Consumer rights and responsibilities among hostel girls
3. To spread awareness among respondents.
4. To outline the consumer awareness level among hostel girls of the study area.

HYPOTHESIS:

1. Most of the respondents are aware of the Goods they are purchasing.
2. Most of the respondents do not aware of the rights and responsibilities of a consumer.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The main purpose of this study is to examine the Consumer problems and awareness among the hostel girls of Gadag-Betageri. This study is relevant because Gadag became a hub of Education and most of the girls from Rural areas and remote places are migrating to Gadag city for the higher education.

METHODOLOGY:

- a) Primary data.
- b) Secondary data.

a) PRIMARY DATA:

Primary data is obtained from original sources by researcher. It is not a published source of data. It has to be created.

In the study primary data is obtained by survey technique method. In the questioning or survey method well informed and desirable person are questioned by the personal interview.

The survey technique is intended to secure one or more items of information from a sample of respondents of a larger group. As data is gathered by asking question to person who were thought to have desired information is called questionnaire technique also.

b) SECONADRY DATA:

Secondary data are readily available for processing. It saves time. It is a cheaper source of data. Cost of information is low. It may not give higher accuracy, reliability.

Sources of secondary data are published books, library research. Government publications, newspapers, magazines, trade journals etc.

In the study secondary data is collected from the google search, Research papers.

PROCEDURE:

The survey was conducted to elicit the information regarding Consumer problems and awareness among the hostel girls of Gadag-Betageri

1. Formulation of research design.
2. Construction of the questionnaire.
3. Locale of the study.
4. Selection of the sample.
5. Conducting the pilot study.
6. Compilation, analysis, interpretation of the data and statistical analysis of selected data.

1) FORMULATION OF RESEARCH DESIGN:

An attempt is made to study the "Consumer problems and awareness among the hostel girls of Gadag-Betageri" survey was the method used.

2) CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

Questionnaire was used as a tool to collect the necessary information, according to Kothari {1990}, "A questionnaire consist of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms".

3) LOCALE OF THE STUDY:

Gadag-Betageri was selected due to the following reasons:

- ❖ It occupies a significant place in the Education Sector.
- ❖ There are about 15 degree colleges, 08 Post graduation centers, 2 Medical colleges, 01 engineering college and more than 10 technical courses like ITI, Diploma, Nursing ... etc
- ❖ Around 4000 girls staying in hostel for the studies purpose of perusing higher education.

The above test concludes that the Majority 80% of the respondents purchases cloths from shops and only 20% from departmental stores

PURCHASING PATTERN OF THE RESPONDENTS

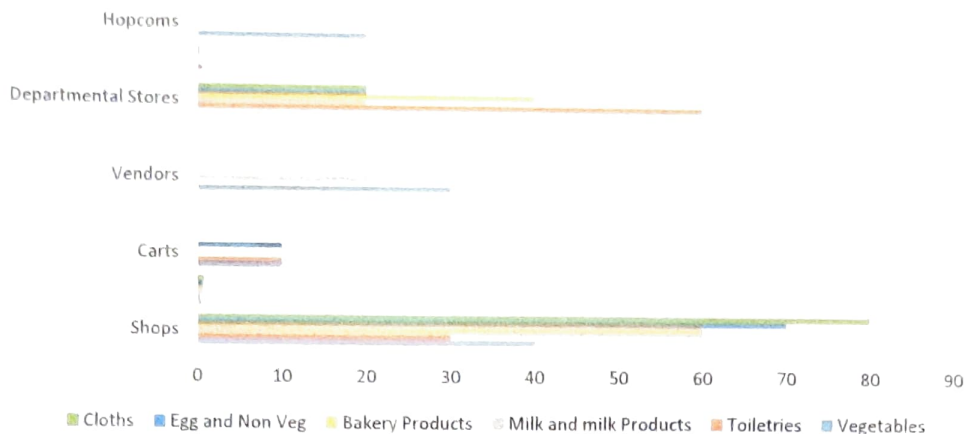


Fig: 1 PURCHASING PATTERN OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 2
Problems faced by Respondents while purchasing

Sl No	Items	Short W/M		Misbranding		Mislabeling		Adulteration	
		Respon dents	%	Respon dents	%	Respon dents	%	Respon dents	%
1	Vegetables& Fruits	100	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Toiletries	-	-	50	50%	10	10%	40	40%
3	Milk and milk Products	20	20%	10	10%	20	20%	50	50%
4	Bakery Products	20	20%	20	20%	50	50%	10	10%
5	Egg and Non Veg	60	60%	10	10%	-	-	30	30%
6	Cloths	40	40%	50	50%	10	10%	-	-

The above table-2 indicates the Problems faced by Respondents while purchasing. From the above table it can be observed that cent percentage of the respondents faces problem in Short weight and measurement in purchasing Vegetables& Fruits

Majority of the respondents facing problems like Miss Branding 50% while purchasing Toiletries, 40% respondents admit that the Toiletries are adulterated and only 10% of the respondents says they face Miss Labelling.

From the above total we observed that 50% respondents feel Milk and milk Products are being adulterated, 20% respondents face Short weight and measurement and Miss Labelling only 10% felt milk is Miss Labelled.

Majority of the respondents 60% felt problems of Short weight and measurement while purchasing Egg and Non Veg items, 30% felt they are adulterated and only 10% respondents felt that they are miss labelled.

The above test concludes that the 50% of the respondents faces problems of Miss Branding while purchasing cloths, 40% replayed Short weight and measurement and only 10% say that cloths are Miss Labelled.

PROBLEMS FACED BY RESPONDENTS WHILE PURCHASING

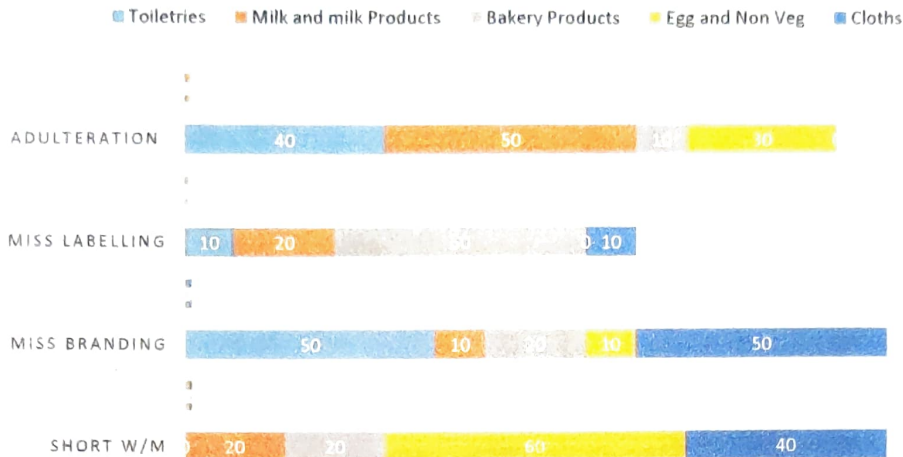


Fig: 2 Problems faced by Respondents while purchasing

Table 3
Consumer awareness

Sl No	Criteria	YES	%	NO	%
1	Awareness of adulteration	60	60%	40	40%
2	Consumer Redressal Mechanism	30	30%	70	70%
3	Aware of Mislabeled	40	40%	60	60%
4	Aware of Misbranding	30	30%	70	70%
5	Aware of Standardization Marks	20	20%	80	80%
6	Aware of Consumer Rights	40	40%	60	60%
7	Aware of Consumer Responsibilities	30	30%	70	70%

From the above data it is very clear that 60% of the respondents aware of the adulteration of the products and goods, only 30% of the respondents admit that they are aware of Consumer Redressal Mechanism when they face problems with the goods or services, only 40% of the respondents admit that they are aware of Mislabeled products, 30% of the respondents admit that they can identify the misbranding products while the purchase, only 20% of the respondents aware of Standardization Marks, 40% of the respondents aware of Consumer Rights and 30% of the respondents aware of Consumer Responsibilities.

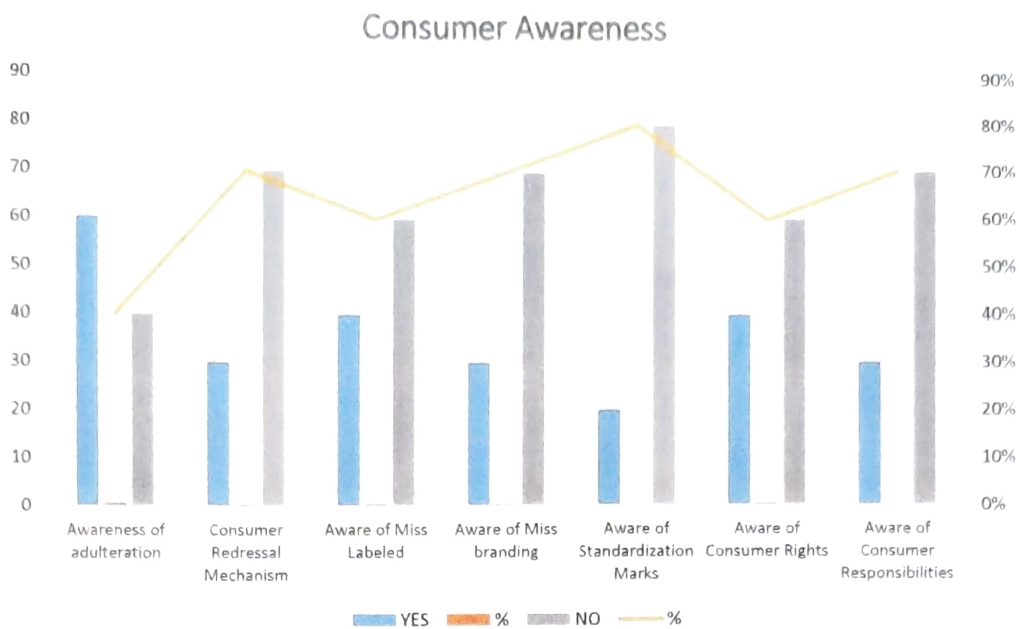


Fig: 3 Consumer awareness

Table 4
Aware of Certification Marks

Sl No	Certification Marks	YES	%	NO	%
1	BIS	78	78%	22	22%
2	ISI	93	93%	07	07%
3	FSSAI	40	40%	60	60%
4	Wool Mark	32	32%	68	68%
5	Silk Mark	47	47%	53	53%
6	Handloom Mark	36	36%	64	64%
7	Eco Mark	18	18%	72	72%
8	BIS Mark	25	25%	75	75%
9	Hall Mark	85	85%	15	15%
10	Veg and Non-veg Mark	45	45%	55	55%

The above table clearly indicates that 78% of the respondents aware of the BIS mark, Majority (93%) of the respondents aware of the ISI marks while purchasing electronic goods, 40% of the respondents aware of the FSSAI mark, 32% of the respondents aware of the while purchasing wool cloths or products, 47% of the respondents aware of the silk mark while purchasing silk clothes, 36% of the respondents aware of the pure handloom mark, only 18% of the respondents aware of the Bureau of Indian Standard mark, 85% of the respondents aware of the Hall mark for the purchase of Gold and silver articles and 45% of the respondents aware of the veg and Non veg mark.

Aware of Certification Marks

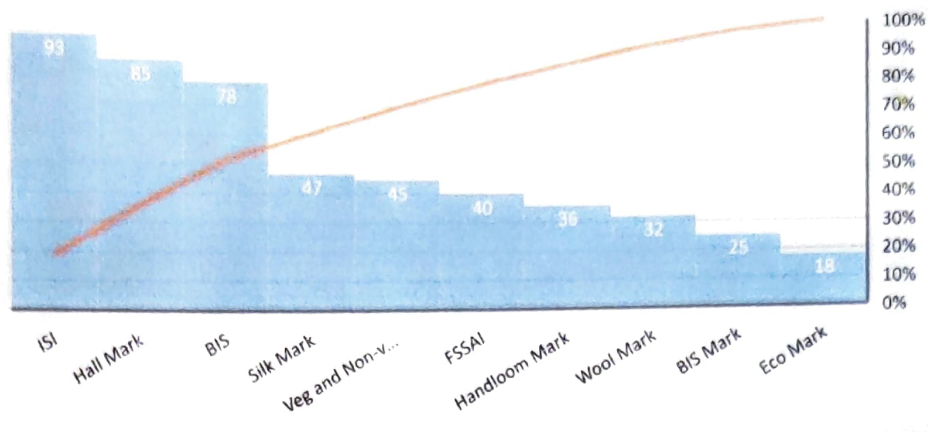


Fig 4: Aware of Certification Marks

Conclusion:

This study concludes that consumer awareness means having the knowledge about the several consumer protection laws, rectified techniques, and consumer rights like the right to protection of health and safety from goods that the consumer purchases and also consumers have the right to be informed about the price, quality, quantity, standards of goods.

With regards to the purchasing pattern of the respondents many purchases day today goods from nearby vendors and shops that leads to adulteration of products, with regards to purchasing pattern respondents are facing the problems like shortage of weights and measurements, Misbranding, mislabeling and adulteration of products they are purchasing.

Regarding awareness only 30-35% of the respondents aware of the market false practices. In this regards the consumer education and awareness should be given more to educate the teenagers.

The study indicates that only 25-30% hostel girls are aware of standardization or certification marks. In this regards also education is needed.

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