



## CONSUMER EDUCATION

All of us use a variety of products everyday. A few of these products can be made at home, while for others we have to go to market and buy them from the shops. Even for the ones that we make at home, we need raw materials which we buy from the market. What has been your experience while shopping? Have you always found goods as per your requirement? Have you been totally satisfied by your purchases? Do advertisements and sale persons always give you correct and complete information about the products you want to buy?

India is one country where a lot of people are ignorant and ill informed. They rely on the information and guidance provided to them by the manufacturers and shopkeepers. A number of these manufacturers and shopkeepers want to make quick and easy money even if it means at the cost of the health and safety of innocent people. Under such circumstances how can we make a satisfactory purchase without being cheated? How do we get the best return for our money?

Let us discuss these and other related questions in this lesson.



### OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to:

- define the terms “consumer” and “consumer education” and explain their importance;
- list the problems faced by consumers and suggest possible solutions for these problems;
- specify rights and responsibilities of the consumer;
- describe the laws for consumers protection.





Notes

### 17.1 DEFINITION OF A CONSUMER

Let us first see, who is a consumer.

Consumers are people who buy goods and services to satisfy their needs.

As is clear from the above definition, we buy a lot of things to fulfil our needs. These may include “goods” like food, clothing, fuel, paper, electronic items, etc. “Services” are the facilities offered to us by various agencies with or without payment. These include water, electricity, health and sanitation, education, transport, communications, etc. Thus, by the above definition we are all consumers irrespective of our age, social and economic background and level of education.

### 17.2 CONSUMER EDUCATION

Consumers are cheated in the market because they do not get proper “consumer education”.

Consumer education means to educate the consumers as to what, where, when, how and how much to buy and how to use what they have bought.

If you understand the above definition, you will be able to appreciate the relevance of educating people so that they can make correct purchases. Consumers are cheated in the market because they do not get proper “consumer education”. Consumer education has today become an important part of school and college curriculum. That is why you are reading this lesson. As per the definition of consumer education we want you to learn about the following:



Fig. 17.1



Fig. 17.2

- **What to buy:** You should buy those products that meet your needs and priorities and are of good quality. Before buying, conduct a market survey and collect as much information as possible about the product. Then decide about a particular brand. Brand name is the popular name by which a product is known in the market like Dhara for vegetable oil, HMT for wrist watches etc.



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- **How much to buy:** Buy just the right quantity as per your need, money and storage space available. This prevents spoilage and wastage.
- **Where to buy:** Purchases can be made at retail shops, cooperative stores, company showrooms, authorised dealers or at wholesale markets.
- **When to buy:** Some goods should be bought when they are in season (fruits and vegetables) others should be bought during off season or in genuine discount sales (room coolers, electric heaters, woollen clothes etc.). Visit shops when the shopkeepers are relatively free. Avoid Sundays and evenings as far as possible.
- **How to buy:** Things can be bought either in cash or on credit. You pay less when you pay cash and if you buy on credit you end up paying more than the original price. You may save and buy by paying cash, or buy on credit with instalment payments. Analyse the terms and conditions in the case of instalment purchases. If it is worthwhile, buy the goods on instalments rather than exhausting your savings cash reserves. Choice is yours! Also ask for the guarantee and warranty cards along with the receipt, it is your right!
- **How to use:** Learn about the proper use of any product or service. Read instructions carefully before use and always follow them to avoid any problem. You can also ask for a demonstration of usage.



Fig. 17.3

### Advantages of Consumer Education

What do you think are the benefits of consumer education? How can you put to use what you have learnt so far? Well, you may probably say that it helps you to:

- develop the ability to decide and choose things intelligently,
- demand safe, reliable and good quality products at a reasonable price,
- be alert, well informed and vigilant against corrupt practices in the market, and
- take suitable action when faced with a problem.

All the points listed above are the advantages of consumer education.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.1

1. Indicate whether the following statements are true or false by writing T or F again each statement. Justify your answer in the space provided.
  - (i) Children are not consumers.



**Notes**

- .....
- .....
- (ii) Sales persons are not the only source of providing information about a product.
- .....
- .....
- (iii) When goods are available at a lower price, it is wise to buy them in as much quantity as is available.
- .....
- .....
- (iv) Room coolers and fans should be bought preferably in winters.
- .....
- .....
- (v) It is better to buy expensive durable goods on instalments rather than not buy them at all.
- .....
- .....

### **17.3 PROBLEMS FACED BY CONSUMERS**

When buying products from the market you may face certain problems. Let us discuss some of them.

#### **17.3.1 Price Variation**

Many times while purchasing products you may notice that the price of the same item is different in different shops within the same market. There are also price variations between markets. Why do prices vary? Sometimes prices vary due to certain genuine reasons and at other times, they vary because the salespersons want to over-charge you. Let us understand the reason first:

- Prices are lower for the same product in wholesale markets as compared to retail markets.
- Prices of packed products are higher than the price for the same product when sold loose. This is due to packaging charges in packed goods.
- Maximum Retail Price (inclusive of all taxes), also called MRP, printed on the label of all products includes the commission of the seller. If he is ready to forgo a part of it, he sells the product at a price lower than the MRP to attract consumers and make them regular customers.



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- Purchasing power of people varies in different localities. The sellers charge more from people who have the capacity of paying more, for example they claim that they provide the products clean and well packed, showroom is clean, attractive and the customer can move around and select the products, there is also facility of free home delivery.
- Products are sold at a reduced price during the "end-of-season" sales or at a discounted rate during "stock clearance" sales or for early birds.
- Products of better quality cost more than the lower quality ones or those nearing the expiry dates.

Some of the ways in which sellers over-charge you are :

- Selling a copy of the popular brand name.
- MRP for certain products varies in different states. These are mentioned on the label, and the shopkeeper takes advantage of this to charge the highest mentioned MRP.
- Selling items loose without a label or packaging so that you cannot read and check its real price.

### 17.3.2 Adulteration and Poor Quality

Adulteration means addition of certain things or their removal from a product, thereby, lowering its quality. Adulteration can also occur because of the use of poor quality raw materials or poor method of production or inappropriate storage of finished products. Adulteration is usually intentional. Such products may be harmful for the health and safety of consumers. However, all low quality products may not necessarily be adulterated ones.

You may have heard of people suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting after eating food and sweets from roadside hawkers. This may be due to adulteration of the food with harmful colours, stale ingredients, poor quality cooking oil, etc. These food items may also have been contaminated with germs. Therefore it is important that we critically evaluate nutritional claims from advertisements and nutrition related news stories. Cases of people getting electric shocks from poorly designed electric irons and immersion rod may also not be new to you. Many fabrics shrink or the colour fades after the very first wash. Readymade garments that are stitched badly or have loose buttons are the other examples of poor quality products.

### 17.3.3 Non-availability - Hoarding and Black Marketing

There may be occasions when you do not find certain products in the market. This non-availability may be because of any of the following reasons:



Fig. 17.4: Black Marketing



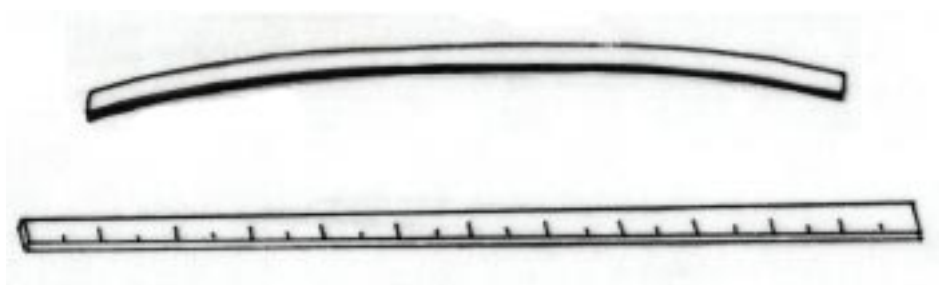
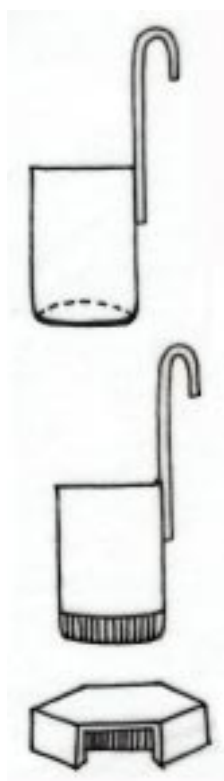
**Notes**

- Genuine and unavoidable reasons like off-season, lower production or less supply due to transporters strike or a natural calamity like drought or floods.
- Artificially created reasons by traders to demand a higher price from you. This is due to hoarding or hiding of certain products and their sale in black market i.e. at unreasonably high prices to needy consumers. Many times, when the manufacturers want to raise prices, they temporarily withhold the supply of their products from the market, thus causing artificial scarcity. Even in normal periods, when the sellers expect a rise in prices, they hoard products. For example, you may find such a situation for petrol, butter, cooking oil, etc., in the months of January and February, that is, just before the budget and Government announcements of new policies on taxes, duties, etc.

### **17.3.4 Defective Weights and Measures**

Shopkeepers use several malpractices while measuring or weighing what you buy. These may be:

- use of irregular weights like bricks or stones or hollow bottom of iron weights which weigh less than the actual weight,
- use the weighing balance with a wooden beam that does not remain horizontal when the pans are empty,
- pointers of weighing scale that do not rest at zero even when no weight is put on the pans,
- placement of a piece of magnet or cardboard under the pans of a weighing scale,
- meters at petrol pumps and in auto-rickshaws and taxis not showing zero readings,
- use of a measure that may be dented or with a false bottom to give less measurements of liquids like milk or oil,
- use of a short or dented measuring rod, or by stretching the fabric or measuring the fabric on marked table tops to measure less fabric, etc. The shopkeepers' intention all the while is to give you less than the promised quantity without your knowledge, thereby earning higher profits.



**Fig. 17.5 : Various methods of cheating consumers in weights and measures.**





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### 17.3.5 Deceptive Trade Practices

You may have observed some of the following deceptive trade practices by shopkeepers and manufacturers:

- packing of small goods in large packets and packing poor quality goods in stylish wrappers that cannot be opened for examining the products inside.
- use of brand names, labels and packaging similar to good quality popular products for low quality products.
- offer of attractive free gifts, sales and discounts with some low quality products or offer of cheap free gifts and discounts that are not genuine, etc.
- selling expired articles at lower prices.
- polishing and packing second hand articles for selling them at first hand prices.

Thus, consumers are deceived and cheated.

### 17.3.6 Poor Consumer Guidance

We have to often rely on the mercy of shopkeepers and manufacturers for information required to make any purchase. But they do not always give us the correct and complete information or they may themselves not have sufficient information. They talk positively about only those brands of products that they stock and get a higher commission. Some salespersons do not pay attention to consumers. They behave rudely and do not show all the items. Thus, the consumers get very little help from these salespersons while making choices. Also there are no standardized consumer booklets available that one can refer to.

### 17.3.7 Lack of Standardised Products

While shopping have you ever noticed that some products bear a quality standard mark like ISI, AGMARK or FPO, along with some numbers? What do they mean to you? Well, these marks are called standardization or certification marks and are issued by the Government. The numbers displayed along with the marks are the numbers of Indian standards corresponding to a product and unique for it. These marks convey that products bearing them are of good quality, correct weight and safe to use. You will read more about these marks later. However, all the products sold in the market including some very popular brands do not bear a standardization mark. For example, when you buy a pressure cooker, you may be un-

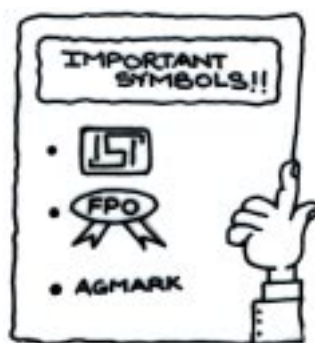


Fig. 17.6 : Way to standardised products



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sure and unable to decide whether to buy a popular brand without a standardization mark or to buy a less popular brand with a standardization mark. This leaves the consumer confused.

Some incidences of misuse and misrepresentation of standardization marks have been reported wherein fake or duplicate products have been found bearing these marks.

### 17.4 SOLUTIONS TO CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Having discussed the numerous problems that a consumer can face in the market today, what suggestions can you give to overcome these? Compare them with the solutions given below.

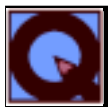
- Always conduct market surveys and tap all the sources of information (TV, magazines, newspapers, salespersons, and if possible some body who is already using the product) before buying a product.
- Buy from Kendriya Bhandar, fair price shops, authorised company show-rooms, cooperative stores or other reliable shops of good reputation in your area. This will enable you to buy good quality products at right price.
- Obtain bills, receipts and gurantee cards for all purchases made and keep them safely. They will be of use in case of any fault in the products.
- Instead of loose items, preferably buy properly packed and labelled products.
- Read labels carefully for brand names, ingredients, nett weight, MRP (maximum retail price), expiry date and standardization mark.
- Think of alternate items, for those that are in short supply. Refuse to pay more and discourage hoarding and black marketing.
- Do not accept irregular weights like bricks and stones. Be alert and vigilant about the weights and measures and the procedure used by the seller.
- Do not get deceived by sales tricks and sales talks, like free gifts and high discounts.



Fig. 17.7: Misleading use of standardization marks



- Buy products that guarantee good quality and after-sales service.
- If you notice any trader cheating or using unfair trade practices do not remain quiet. Report such cases to the concerned authorities.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2

1. Fill in the blanks choosing the correct words from the brackets.
  - (i) The MRP is the ..... price at which a product is sold in the market. (minimum/maximum/moderate)
  - (ii) Food items sold loose have high chances of ..... (theft/breakage/adulteration)
  - (iii) Hiding away of scarce products and their sale at a high price is called ..... (hoarding/profitteering/black marketing)
  - (iv) Sale of small soap cakes in large packets is a ..... sale practice. (deceptive/positive/effective)
  - (v) Shopkeepers and manufacturers should provide the consumer with all the ..... to enable them to make a wise purchase. (discounts/information/gifts).
  - (vi) Products bearing ..... marks are of good quality (identification/trade/standardization)
2. List any two effective solutions to consumer problems.



**Activity :** Visit a local market and observe the sellers weighing their products. Make a note of fair and unfair measures used.

## 17.5 CONSUMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Do you know that as a consumer you enjoy certain rights? These rights have been formally given to us by the government under the **Consumer Protection Act**. Let us learn about them.

### 17.5.1 Consumer rights

1. **Right to safety:** This right protects us against products and services that are harmful to our life and property like adulterated food and unsafe electrical appliances.
2. **Right to be informed:** This gives us the right to be informed about the quality, quantity, and price of goods and services. Hence all products must have a label and this information must be mentioned on the label.



Notes



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3. **Right to choose:** This entitles us to the right to have access to a variety of goods and services of satisfactory quality at a reasonable price.
4. **Right to be heard:** This gives us the right to voice our protest against any malpractice of the traders and oppressive government policies, and receive due consideration.
5. **Right to redressal:** This means that we have the right to a fair settlement and compensation for genuine and just complaints against faulty goods and services.
6. **Right to consumer education:** This enables us to acquire knowledge and abilities to make wise choices.

The rights mentioned above have been accepted all over the world. A knowledge of these rights will help us to protect ourselves against the various unfair practices of traders. However we should be careful and not misuse them.

### 17.5.2 Consumer Responsibilities

If you want to enjoy certain rights you have to fulfill certain responsibilities as well. You must always try and behave in a responsible manner and develop good purchasing habits.

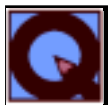
Following are some of your responsibilities.

- Take bills, receipts, guarantee cards, etc., and keep them safely and maintain them as records. They are the proof of your purchase and help in getting redressal in case of genuine grievance.
- Insist on buying good quality products with standardisation marks, even if they are not of popular names. This will help in removing substandard products from the market.
- Do not let yourself get carried away by sales talks, attractive labels, packaging, free gifts and advertisements and other such sales tricks or gimmicks.
- Follow the manufacturer's instruction for use, care and maintenance of a product carefully.
- Do not misuse the customer services offered by manufacturers and shopkeepers like free home delivery, exchange within a specified period, credit, etc.
- Report cases of cheating and encourage other consumers also to do the same. Cooperate with law enforcement agencies in getting the guilty traders punished.



Fig. 17.8 : Solutions to consumer problems

- Do not waste any product. Make an effort to conserve resources so that they can last longer.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.3

1. Which of the following are consumers rights? Tick (✓) the correct answers:
  - (i) Right to discount
  - (ii) Right to choose
  - (iii) Right to safety
  - (iv) Right to free home delivery
  - (v) Right to be heard
  - (vi) Right to standardized products
  - (vii) Right to information
  - (viii) Right to technology
  - (ix) Right to communicate
  - (x) Right to consumer education
  - (xi) Right to computer education
  - (xii) Right to redressal
  - (xiii) Right to return
2. Fill in the blanks with the correct answer.
  - (i) ..... should be kept safely as it is a proof of purchase of product.
  - (ii) Incidences of cheating and unfair trade practices should be ..... to the concerned authorities to punish the guilty;
  - (iii) To ensure long life of an electrical gadget it is very important to follow its manufacturer's .....for use, care and maintenance.
3. Read the following problems and state the right the person will need.
  - (i) Mohan went to a shoe palace. Now he is trying to decide which one to buy out of Lotus Bawa, Adidas, Reebok and Nike.  
Right to.....
  - (ii) Radha bought an immersion rod a few days back which stopped working. She goes back to the shopkeeper and wants it either replaced or rectified by the shop owner.  
Right to.....



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- (iii) Mina bought a tin of desi ghee. When she opened it, it was smelling bad. She went to the shopkeeper who refused to hear her complaint because of which she wanted to be heard and approached the consumer court.

Right to.....

## 17.6 LAWS FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION

Our government has passed certain laws to protect our rights as consumer. Under these laws any consumer with a genuine grievance can file a formal complaint against a trader and take him to court. These laws are briefly discussed below.

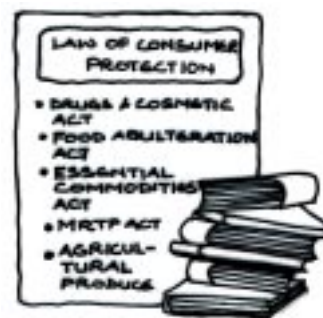


Fig. 17.9

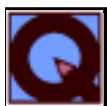
- **Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act:** Under this Act, the AGMARK standardization mark is given by the Government to agricultural or farm produce (e.g. wheat flour, gram flour, honey, spices, ghee, etc). This law ensures that these products are tested for purity, graded according to their quality and packed suitably.
- **Drugs and Cosmetics Act:** It regulates and ensures that only standard quality medicines and cosmetics are sold in the market with a proper cash memo or bill.
- **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act:** This law protects the consumer against adulterated and spoilt food stuff.
- **Essential Commodities Act:** As per this Act, the Government ensures that all the goods and services essential to life are available in the market at a reasonable price. The Government list of essential commodities includes items like cereals, pulses, sugar, raw jute, cotton and woollen textiles, medicines, paper, coal, petrol and petroleum products, iron, steel, cattle fodder, etc.
- **Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act:** This act protects consumers from being exploited by unfair trade practices like giving false or misleading statement and advertisements, sale of substandard products, hoarding and blackmarketing. It also prevents traders from conducting any contest or lottery with no intention of giving the promised prizes.
- **Standards of Weights and Measures Act:** This Act prevents the use of non-standard weights and measures. It makes it compulsory for all products to bear a detailed label. You will learn about labels later.
- **Fruit Product Order (FPO):** Under this Act, it is compulsory for all manu-



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facturers of fruit and vegetable products to maintain a certain standard in respect of quality, packing, labelling and sanitary conditions during production, storage and sale. It ensures that safe canned, preserved and processed products like pickles, jams, juices, squashes, frozen vegetables and fruits are sold in the market. All products that meet the FPO specification are given the FPO standardization mark.

- **Consumer Protection Act (CPA/COPRA):** This Act clearly defines consumer rights and responsibilities. It seeks to provide consumers with quick, easy and inexpensive redressal of their genuine complaints. Under this Act, the consumers can file complaints against goods and services provided by not only private companies but also the Government departments. For the legal settlement of complaints, courts have been set up at the District, State and National level. Such courts are called Consumer Redressal Forums.
- **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act:** Under this Act, the quality certification mark ISI is given to those products which meet the specifications and standards set by the Bureau of Indian Standards. The BIS gives specification for products in terms of material used, method of production, labelling, packing, storage and sale. For quality control the BIS conducts surprise checks of the ISI marked products. This Act also prohibits the improper use and misrepresentation of the ISI mark. Examples of products bearing ISI mark are ghee, biscuits, detergent, pressure cooker, electric iron, immersion rod, geyser, LPG cylinders, etc.



#### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.4

1. Match the items listed in column A with laws mentioned in column B, under which you can file complaints if these are unsatisfactory.

##### Column A

- (i) Medicines
- (ii) Ghee
- (iii) Misleading advertisements
- (iv) Pickles
- (v) Pressure Cooker
- (vi) Artificially coloured sweets

##### Column B

- (a) Fruit Products Order
- (b) Bureau of Indian Standards Act
- (c) Drugs and Cosmetics Act
- (d) Essential Commodities Act
- (e) Prevention of Food Adulteration Act
- (f) Agricultural Produce (Grading/Marking) Act
- (g) MRTP Act
- (h) Standards of Weights and Measures Act.



Notes

## 17.7 STANDARDIZATION MARKS

**Standardization Marks:** You have read about standardization marks in the previous pages. What is standardization? What are standardization or certification marks? On which products are they found? How to recognise them? For the answer to all these questions read on.

A standardization mark is a mark given to a product which meets certain standards with respect to the quality of the product in terms of material used, method of manufacture, labelling, packing, sale and performance.

Look around in your house and check various items for the following marks. Where have you seen them?

**ISI Mark:** This mark is given by the BIS over specifications and method of testing products.

15000 standards covering a variety of vegetable, fruit and meat products, processed foods, vanaspati, soaps, detergents, paper, paint, nonstick utensils, electrical goods, stoves, LPG cylinders, cement etc. are given ISI marks.

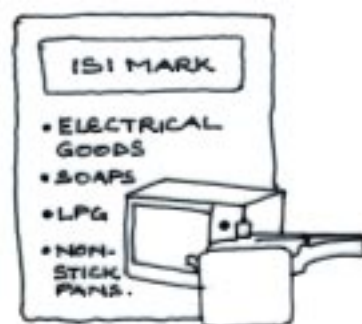


Fig. 17.10: ISI Mark



Fig. 17.11: Agmark

**AGMARK:** So far, standards have been prescribed for about 142 agricultural, horticultural, forest and livestock products, like wheat floor, pure ghee, honey, and spices.

**FPO:** This mark requires all manufacturers of fruit and vegetable products to acquire a licence for their production and sale after meeting the FPO standards. Products like jams, pickles, squashes, juices and ketchups are given FPO mark.

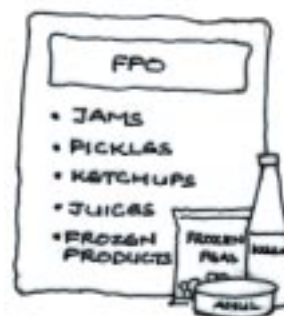


Fig. 17.12: FPO





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**Wool Mark:** A standard mark of International Wool Secretariate was established in 1949. It promotes pure wool products. It makes it necessary for manufacturers to mention the amount and identity of other fibres used along with pure wool on the label of wool and woolen garments.

**ECO Mark:** It has been launched recently by the BIS. It is given to those products which not only meet ISI standards but are also recyclable and save energy; that is, they are environment friendly. Such products help in reducing environmental pollution.



Fig. 17.10: Eco Mark

Nowdays you might have observed a green or red dot on the label and advertisements of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food products. This mark is given in the form of a dot enclosed in a square. When this symbol is green, it is a vegetarian product, whereas a red symbol indicates the use of non-vegetarian ingredients. This symbol is useful to identify vegetarian and non-vegetarian food products according to your eating habits. This mark is an additional information provided by the manufacturers to help the consumers make an informed choice. You can see this symbol on certain medicines also.

The standardization marks discussed above have been laid down by the Government to prevent poor quality, duplicate and unsafe products from coming into the market. Thus, they help you to make wise choices without wasting your time, energy and money.

**Labels :** A label may be a piece of paper with information engraved or attached on to the packaging of a product. It gives you the following important information about a product.

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| ● Name of the product                      | ● Nett weight / volume / length |
| ● Brand name                               | ● Maximum retail price (MRP)    |
| ● Manufacturer's name and address          | inclusive of all taxes          |
| ● Contents/Ingredients                     | ● Warning and precautions       |
| ● Use of the product                       | ● Guarantee period              |
| ● Directions for use, care and maintenance |                                 |
| ● Dates of manufacture and expiry          |                                 |
| ● Dosage in the case of medicines          |                                 |

You must develop the habit of reading labels carefully before buying a product.





Notes

Once we get into the habit of reading labels it will be very beneficial. This way we get information about the consequences of various consumer products. We can also save ourselves from substance abuse, eg tobacco, alcohol. For example, if you read a label on the cigarette packet it reads “Smoking is injurious to health”. Reading this can encourage you not to smoke.

### Packaging

Packaging refers to the container or wrapper in which a product is kept for marketing and sale. A good package helps you in many ways:

- it protects the products from damage, breakage and spoilage,
- it helps in easy handling, transportation and storage of products,
- it prevents the products from pilferage and adulteration, and
- attractive packaging invites you to pick a product and buy it.

### 17.8 ADVERTISEMENTS

You must have seen and heard about many advertisements on radio, TV, newspapers and magazines. What is the purpose of these advertisements? Yes, you are right. The purpose of an advertisement is to inform the consumers about the availability, use and special features of a particular brand of product. A good advertisement should give you correct information about a product and not mislead you. Some advertisements persuade you to buy things that you may not need. As a conscious and alert consumer, you should judge a product by actually examining it and not on basis of its advertisement alone.



### INTEXT QUESTION 17.5

1. Following is a list of products, write the standardization mark (ISI/AGMARK/FPO/Woolmark) usually found on each in the space provided
 

(i) paint.....	(ii) electric iron.....
(iii) honey.....	(iv) canned fruit juice.....
(v) pure wool shawl.....	(vi) ground spices.....
(vii) pure ghee .....	(viii) LPG cylinders .....
(ix) knitting wool.....	(x) frozen peas .....
2. Fill in the blanks, with appropriate words.
  - (i) Before buying a medicine its.....should be read carefully
  - (ii) .....saves a product from breakage and spoilage
  - (iii) An advertisement gives.....about a product.



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(vi) Purchase of products with standardisation mark ensures that they are of a certain minimum .....

3. List any six items of information that should be mentioned on a label—

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| (i) .....   | (iv) ..... |
| (ii) .....  | (v) .....  |
| (iii) ..... | (vi) ..... |



**Activity:** Collect one each of the following:

1. Advertisement from a newspaper/magazine for an electrical item.
2. A handbill advertisement on discount sales of garments/food item.

List the information given on these advertisements. Check whether they give all the information you need to make a purchase. Also check how many of them give correct information.

### 17.9 CONSUMER MOVEMENT

The numerous consumer problems mentioned earlier clearly bring out the need for you to be well informed and vigilant. This will enable you to make the best purchases and get the maximum value for your money. It will also discourage traders from using unfair and deceptive ways. However, you or the Government alone cannot protect all the consumers. Therefore, all consumers should fulfill their responsibilities and unite to protect themselves. A strong and active consumer movement is the most effective way of removing consumer problems. Consumer education helps people to develop a strong consumer movement.

Consumer movement is a joint action of consumers against unfair practices of the traders and manufacturers.

#### Importance of Consumer Movement

In our country where a majority of consumers are ill-informed and ignorant, a strong consumer movement is required to exercise control over shopkeepers and manufacturers, so that the consumers are given a fair deal. By collective action, consumers can look after their welfare.

A consumer movement helps consumers to

- be aware of their rights and responsibilities and use them regularly,



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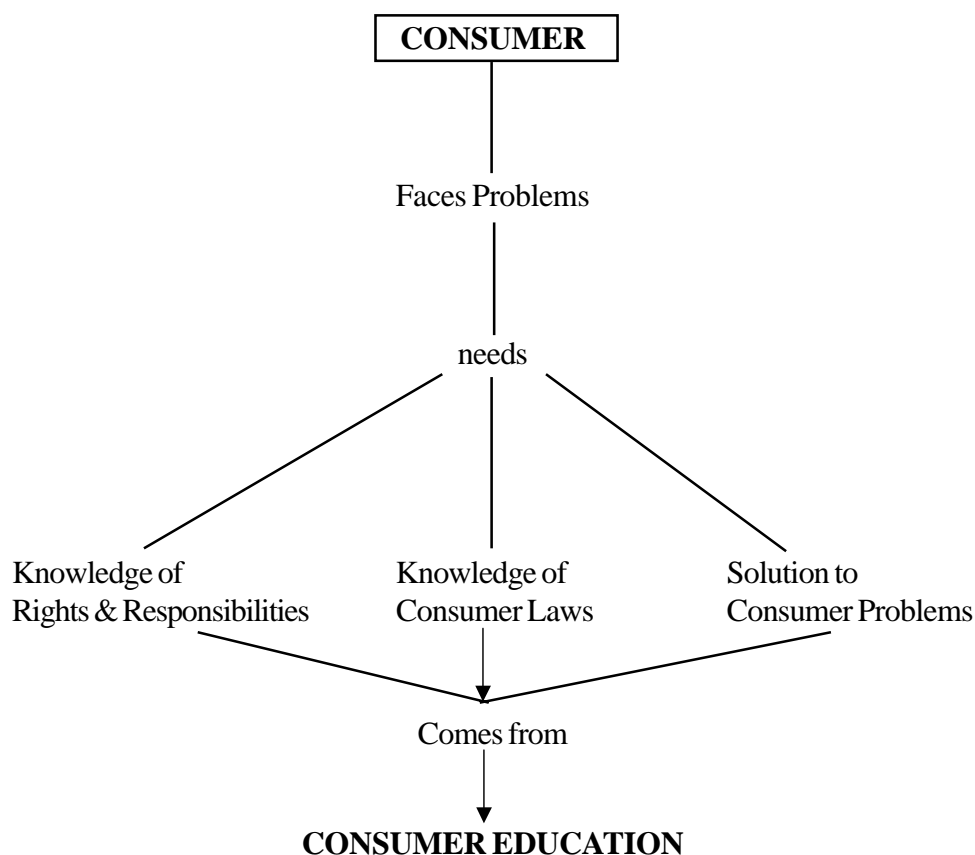
- take action and report cases of wrong practices to concerned authorities. It helps consumer to seek redressal and get the guilty punished,
- share information regarding new products, consumer laws and schemes beneficial to them, and
- represent the consumer interests to the Government.

As a result of consumer movement, today, many motivated consumers have come together and formed groups to make their own unions, associations, societies, cooperatives, etc. Presently there are about 600 such organisations in India. To motivate and strengthen the consumer movement the Government has declared 15th of March as the **Consumer Rights Day**.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.6

1. Indicate whether the following statements are true or false by writing T or F against each statement. Justify your answer in the space given below.
  - (i) It is not possible for all consumers to unite and form consumer groups for preventing traders from using unfair sales practices.  
.....  
.....
  - (ii) A strong consumer movement increases consumer rights and decreases consumer responsibilities.  
.....  
.....
  - (iii) Every year March 15<sup>th</sup> is celebrated as Consumer Rights Day.  
.....  
.....
  - (iv) Consumers can help in developing a consumer movement that can look after the interests of the consumers in Government policies and programmes.  
.....  
.....
  - (v) Some consumer unions assist consumers to take legal action against the guilty traders.  
.....  
.....

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT****TERMINAL EXERCISES**

1. Define the following terms:
  - (i) Consumer (ii) Consumer Education (iii) Consumer Movement
2. List the various problems faced by the consumers in the market today. Suggest solutions to any three problems.
3. Enumerate the consumer rights and discuss consumer responsibilities.
4. What is the importance of consumer protection laws? Describe the following laws: .
  - (i) Essential Commodities Act
  - (ii) Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act
  - (iii) Consumer Protection Act and
  - (iv) Standards of Weights and Measures Act.

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5. Discuss the role of the following as consumer aids in assisting consumers in making wise purchases:  
(i) labels (ii) packaging (iii) advertisements
6. What is standardization? List the standardization marks available in the Indian market and describe them.
7. What do you understand by wise buying habits? Explain in detail in relation to the purchase of an electric iron.



### ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 17.1** (i) F, (ii) T, (iii) F, (iv) T, (v) T
- 17.2** (i) maximum, (ii) adulteration, (iii) blackmarketing  
(iv) deceptive, (v) information, (vi) standardization
- 17.3** 1. (ii), (iii), (v), (vii), (x), (xii)  
2. (i) bill / receipt / guarantee card /  
(ii) reported  
(iii) instructions
- 17.4** (i) c, (ii) f, (iii) g, (iv) a, (v) b, (vi) e
- 17.5** 1. (i) ISI, (ii) ISI, (iii) AGMARK, (iv) FPO, (v) Wool mark  
(vi) AGMARK, (vii) AGMARK, (viii) ISI, (ix) Wool mark,  
(x) FPO  
2. (i) label, (ii) packaging, (iii) information, (iv) standards  
3. Refer Text.
- 17.6** 1. (i) F, (ii) F, (iii) T, (iv) T and (v) T

**AUDIO** – Consumer Education – Rights and Responsibilities

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