

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF CONSUMERISM IN INDIA: A SOCIO LEGAL STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

A consumer is a person who has to perform a tough task of separating chaff from the grains. He is part and parcel of the economy. He faces a great deal of challenges in present ranging from bad quality goods to high prices.

The advancement in different of variety of consumer goods has now made the market more complex. It is often difficult for the consumer to judge their quality adequately. The advertisements regarding the taste, favour, style, quality standards of the commodities and services of their products by the manufacturers and dealers always allure the consumer to purchase their goods.

However, process of development along with increasing liberalization and globalisation across the country has enabled consumers to realise their increasingly important role in society as a consumer. Consumer has started purchasing more but they have started raising voice against anti-consumer practices. The concentration of the market power in the hands of a select few has affected consumers' behaviour over time. In a developing country like India where the incidence of poverty and unemployment is very high and the level of literacy is very low, the people face a volume of problems, particularly in the context of consumer related issues. Unlike in the developed world, consumers in these countries have not been able to play a greater role in the development process.

WHO IS A CONSUMER?

A consumer is one who is the decision maker whether or not to buy an item at the store, or someone who is influenced by advertisement and marketing.¹ According to Oxford Dictionary, consumer is a purchaser of goods or services. He is the end user and not necessarily a purchaser in the distribution chain of a good or service.²

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¹ Available at: <http://www.consumerrights.org.in/meaning-of-consumer.html>

² Available at: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/consumer.html>

Under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 a consumer is defined under Section 2(d) as follows:

“Consumer” means any person who,

(i) buys any goods for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised, or under any system of deferred payment and includes any user of such goods other than the person who buys such goods for consideration paid or promised or partly paid or partly promised, or under any system of deferred payment, when such use is made with the approval of such person, but does not include a person who obtains such goods for resale or for any commercial purpose; or

(ii) hires or avails of any services for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised, or under any system of deferred payment and includes any beneficiary of such services other than the person who hires or avails of the services for consideration paid or promised, or partly paid and partly promised, or under any system of deferred payment, when such services are availed of with the approval of the first mentioned person but does not include a person who avails of such services for any commercial purpose.

In *Morgan Stanley Mutual Fund v. Kartika Das*,³ it was said that the consumer as the term implies is one who consumes. As per the definition in CPA, consumer is the one who purchases goods for private use or consumption. The meaning of word is broadly stated in the above definition, so as to include anyone who consumes goods and services at the end chain of production.

In *Indian Medical Association v. V. P. Shanta*,⁴ giving abroad to the term consumer, it was held that medical services are “services” under the consumer protection act.

M. K. Gandhi said about a customer, “*The customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption on our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider on our business; he is*

³ (1994) 4 SCC 225

⁴ AIR (1996) SC 550

the part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so".⁵

WHAT IS CONSUMERISM?

It does not have an exact definition. There are several meanings and definitions for this term. Some of them are similar, most of them are conflicting. The term 'consumerism' had been first used in the year 1915 and referred to advocacy of the rights and interests of consumers" defined in Oxford English Dictionary but here in this article the term 'consumerism' means the sense which was first used in 1960, emphasis on or preoccupation with the acquisition of consumer goods.⁶

CONSUMERISM IN TERMS OF EXCESSIVE GOOD PURCHASING

Consumerism means continual expansion of one's wants and needs for goods and services.⁷ It can be said as a materialistic attachment to possessions. The consumer satisfy his wants and keep them increasing and thereby purchase more of goods and then consume them.

Consumerism is a social as well as economic order which encourages the buying of goods and services in ever-greater amounts. This term is sometimes associated with critics of consumption beginning with Thorstein Veblen or more recently by a movement called Enoughism. Veblen's topic of examination, the newly emerging middle class coming up at the threshold of the twentieth century, is coming to full fruition by twentieth century end through the process of globalization.

CONSUMERISM AS CONSUMER MOVEMENT

At some places, the term 'consumerism' refers to the consumerist's movement, consumer activism or consumer protection which seeks to defend and inform consumers by having required these practices as honest advertising and packaging, product guarantees, and

⁵ Available at <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/IAGS/article/download/865/780>

⁶ Available at <http://www.consumerrights.org.in/consumerism.html>

⁷ Available at <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/consumerism.html>

enhanced standards of safety. As commonly understood consumerism refer to a wide range of activities of government, business, and individual designed to protect rights of consumers.⁸

It is treated as a policy of protecting and informing consumers through honesty in price and quality. In this regard it is a movement having a mission of regulating the products, methods, services, and standards of sellers, manufacturers and advertisers in the buyers' interests. In fact consumerism today is an all pervasive term meaning nothing more than people's search for getting better value for their money.⁹

CONSUMERISM FROM ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW

As per economics, consumerism means economic policies laying emphasis on consumption. In a sense, it is believed that the consumers are free to make choice and should dictate the society's economic structure.

Consumerism is economically resembled in constant purchasing of new goods and services, with little attention to their true need, durability, product origin or the environmental consequences of manufacture and disposal. It is driven by huge sums spent on advertising designed to create both a desire to follow trends, and the resultant satisfaction of needs and wants. Materialism is one of the end results of consumerism. Here, it can be said that the meaning of consumerism from economic point of view ultimately leads to meaning of consumerism from view of excessive purchasing and leading to mean as a movement. All these meanings though not common or similar, are in one or the other way attached to each other.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CONSUMERISM

Consumerism has links with western world but it is in fact an international phenomenon. People purchasing goods and utilizing them in excess of their needs is old as civilizations, for example ancient Egypt, ancient Rome etc.

A great turn in consumerism arrived just before the industrial revolution. In the nineteenth century, capitalist development and industrial revolution were primarily focused on capital

⁸ S. S. Singh and Sapna Chadah, Consumer Protection In India, Published Under Aeges Of Consultancy Assignment By Department Of Consumer Affairs, Ministry Of Consumer Affairs, Government Of India (1st Ed. 2005) p. 6

⁹ Ibid at p. 6

goods sector and industrial infrastructure. At that time essential consumer commodities and commercial activities had developed to a great extent but not to the same extent as that of other sectors. During that time some leaders came to understand that mass production presupposed mass consumption. During that time Winslow Taylor came up with his theory of scientific management. His theory led to changes in price range of goods and their availability and thus leading to change in consumption patterns of consumer. The consumer started purchasing more and consuming more.

Industrial revolution changed the time as it never has been. Prices of goods were reduced with led to mass consumption. This is the reason why the era of industrial revolution is treated to mark with the concept of consumerism.

CONSUMERISM IN INDIA

Consumer co-operative movement has originated from Britain. Twenty eight weavers joined together and started a consumer society known as “*Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers*” at Rochdale in 1844 to protect themselves against the exploitation of unscrupulous traders. The success of the Rochdale Stores led to the growth of the movement throughout the world. The movement gained importance in India in 1912 when Cooperative Societies Act was passed. However the cooperative could not become successful before the First World War. Consumers cooperative were described as ‘War babies’ as it gained importance during was period. But this movement has not succeeded in its attempt to protect consumers’¹⁰. Thereafter; several movements took place, which marked the beginning of consumerism in India.

EFFECTS OF CONSUMERISM

Consumerism does not positive effects on society, economy and environment. The positive has always clubbed with certain negative effects. These effects are as follows:

Positive Consumerism Effects

- 1) More industrial production.
- 2) A higher growth rate economy.

¹⁰ Available at <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/IAGS/article/download/865/780>

- 3) More goods and services available.
- 4) More advertising since goods manufactured have to be sold.
- 5) Increased production will result in more employment opportunities.
- 6) A variety of goods and services to choose from.
- 7) More comforts for a better living style.

Negative Consumerism Effects

- 1) *High Craving For Goods And Services*- The wants and desires of the people increase. The better their income, the better their purchasing power. But in case, they are not able to do so, and then they feel dissatisfied.
- 2) *High competition leading to tension*- One is in a competition to earn more and is forced to cope up with stress and other work related tensions.
- 3) *Importance to material wealth*- Material wealth is the deciding factor about whether a society is highly developed or not. Spiritual values and cultures are underplayed.
- 4) *Over-dependence on labour saving devices*- Every consumer wants to do no work. He wants to make use of gadgets to save his labour and energy.
- 5) *Increasing crime*- Crime rate also increases as wants to possess expensive gadgets increase. Thefts become common and robberies take place. More than that people may kill other to satisfy their want for material possessions.
- 6) *Distorted personal relationship*- Personal relationships also get affected as people are busy trying to earn more to maintain their standard of living. They do not have time for their family members and their loved ones.
- 7) *Value of home industries reduced*- Cheaper goods are imported from other goods affecting the growth of locally based manufacturing industries.
- 8) *Effect on environment*- Consumerism has also resulted in ecological imbalances. The natural habitat is being destroyed to create more goods and build more buildings affecting the weather. Global warming will eventually result in health problems.

Industrial pollution is affecting people in many ways. Consumerism is also depleting the natural resources of the respective country.

- 9) *Change in cultural values*- People lifestyles have also changed in the sense they are more lavish, full of material comforts rather than focusing on simplicity. The Eastern spiritualism and philosophy has always laid emphasis on simplicity. Gandhian principles and values favor a non-materialistic approach to life.
- 10) *Effect on physical and mental health*- Psychological health also can get affected if one's desires are not meant such as depression. Jealousy and envy can lead to crime.

CONSUMERISM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION IN INDIA

Consumer Rights

Based upon UN guidelines (adopted in 1985, revised in 1999) for consumer protection, a consumer has following rights:

- 1) Right to safety
- 2) Right to be informed
- 3) Right to choose
- 4) Right to fair hearing
- 5) Right to satisfaction of basis needs
- 6) Right to healthy environment
- 7) Right to redressal of grievances
- 8) Right to consumer education

NEED FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer protection movement is a part of global recognition. Consumer protection means safeguarding the rights and interests of consumers. It includes all the measures aimed at

protecting the rights and interests of consumers.¹¹ Hence, it is necessary that consumers must be protected against unfair activities of producers and sellers.

Thus a consumer needs protection against activities like-

- Unsafe and harmful products
- Unfair trade practices
- False advertising
- Abuse of monopoly power
- Environmental pollution

REASON FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumers need protection due to the following reasons:

1. Illiteracy and ignorance:

Consumers in India are mostly illiterate and ignorant. They do not understand their rights. A system is required to protect them from unscrupulous businessmen.

2. Unorganised consumers:

In India consumers are widely dispersed and are not united. They are at the mercy of businessmen. On the other hand, producers and traders are organised and powerful.

3. Spurious goods:

There is increasing supply of duplicate products. It is very difficult for an ordinary consumer to distinguish between a genuine product and its imitation. He pays the price for the original but gets a substandard product. It is necessary to protect consumers from such exploitation.

4. Deceptive advertising:

¹¹ Available at http://www.zenithresearch.org.in/images/stories/pdf/2011/May/vol-1_issue-1_art-7.pdf

Some businessmen give misleading information about quality, safety and utility of products. Consumers are misled by false advertisement and do not know the real quality of advertised goods. A mechanism is needed to prevent misleading advertisements.

5. Malpractices of businessmen:

Fraudulent, unethical and monopolistic trade practices on the part of businessmen lead to exploitation of consumers. Consumers often get defective, inferior and substandard goods and poor service.

Certain measures are required to protect the consumers against such malpractices. Greedy businessmen indulge in adulteration, hoarding, black-marketing and other illegal practices.

6. Freedom of enterprise:

Businessmen must ensure satisfaction of consumers. In the long run survival and growth of business is not possible without the support and goodwill of consumers. If business does not protect consumer's interests. Government intervention and regulatory measures will grow to curb unfair trade practices.

CONSUMER PROTECTION IN INDIA

In the early years when welfare legislatures like the consumer protection Act did not exist, the maxim Caveat emptor (let the buyer beware) governed the market deals. We find the seeds of consumer protection during the Mughal times and especially during the time of Khiljis.¹² During the British regime (1765-1947), also known as the '*Colonial Era*', Government's economic policies in India was concerned more with protecting and promoting the British interests than with advancing the welfare of the native population.¹³

However there were certain legislations which provided for protection of consumer rights. These included the Indian Penal code, 1860, the sale of Goods act, 1930, the dangerous drugs act, 1930 and the drugs and cosmetics act, 1940.

¹² Available at http://www.zenithresearch.org.in/images/stories/pdf/2011/May/vol-1_issue-1_art-7.pdf

¹³ *Ibid*

During post-independence scenario, there was greater focus on industrialization. After that time there came some important enactments such as, Banking Regulation Act, Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951 which dealt with consumer protection.

With the opening up of the Global Market and economics and progressive removal of international trade barriers, two phenomenons have been witnessed with. First, there is influx of foreign brands and franchises. Second, within India, there is increasing competition among manufacturers which has benefited consumers in the form of improvement in quality of goods and resources. Thus in turn has witnessed more and more legislations aimed at regulating the manufacturing and trading activities and providing protection to consumers at large. Now the maxim caveat emptor has been replaced by, “let the seller beware”. As a result of this change in scenario business has now come to be substantially regulated by Government and Authorities in favour of consumers.¹⁴

Other than above mentioned reasons for consumer protection, an Indian consumer needs protection because of certain factors such as-

- Low literacy level
- Disorganised consumerism
- Less competitive products in the Indian market
- No proper implementation of laws and legal protection.

FATE OF CONSUMERISM IN INDIA

Consumerism is still in not well developed in our country. Other than certain educated people living in major cities, most of the consumers reside in villages, who are not well educated and informed. The rising tide of consumerism is a matter of interest, and sometimes concern, to politicians, civil servants, businessmen, consumerists themselves, and students of consumer behaviour.¹⁵

In modern times it is necessary that consumer is supposed to be the king and business is expected to provide maximum possible satisfaction to consumers. But in reality, consumers

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ Available at <http://www.econ.umn.edu/library/mnpapers/1972-17.pdf>

are often exploited. In a country like India there is shortage of many products. A few firms enjoy monopoly powers in the market place. What consumerism lacks here are education and information resources, testing facilities, competent leadership, price control mechanism, and adequate quasi-judicial machinery.¹⁶ In a developing country like India consumerism has to a great job. It has to move into minds of every human being to enable them to understand their rights and privileges.

RELATION OF CONSUMERISM WITH SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

Relation with Individual

The relation of consumerism with individual is both positive and negative. On one hand Consumerism results in the loss of things which are important to the human rather than those gained by materialistic acquisitions, like family and community relations. Consumerism puts the individual onto a never-ending, ever-accelerating urge of acquiring possessions leaving little time and energy for more meaningful things in life. Attachment to possessions rather than is now leading to selfishness and miserliness.

Consumerism leads to judging and treating people according to their possessions, which give rise to hatred and causes a breakdown in family and community relations. Furthermore, if consumerism leads a person towards debt, crime or depression; this results in much anxiety, and inevitably strains one's social relations with others.

Consumerism sets each person against themselves in an endless quest for the attainment of material things or the imaginary world conjured up and made possible by things yet to be purchased. Weight training, diet centers, cosmetic surgery, permanent eye make-up, liposuction, collagen injections, these are some examples of people turning themselves into human consumer goods more suited for the "marketplace" than living in a healthy balanced society.

On the positive side, consumerism requires individual to be well educated and informed so as to protect their rights. Consumerism makes a consumer aware of his rights, help him in raising voice against exploitation and seek redressal of his grievances. Consumer's

¹⁶

Available

at

<http://www.lakeproject.net/download/India/Consumer%20Law/Concept%20of%20Consumerism%20in%20India.%20Judicial%20Attitude.pdf>

consciousness determines the effectiveness of consumerism.¹⁷ Hence, it is all about information and knowledge. A knowledgeable consumer can help in reducing ill effects of consumerism, giving rise to positive aspects.

RELATION WITH SOCIETY

The modern consumer is not an isolated individual making purchases in a vacuum. Rather, we are all participants in a contemporary phenomenon that has been variously called a consumerist culture and a consumer society. To say that some people have consumerist values or attitudes means that they always want to consume more, and that they find meaning and satisfaction in life, to a large extent, through the purchase of new consumer goods. Consumerism has emerged as part of a historical process that has created mass markets, industrialization, and cultural attitudes that ensure that rising incomes are used to purchase an ever-growing output¹⁸

Consumerism interferes with the workings of society by replacing the normal common-sense desire for an adequate supply of life's necessities, community life, a stable family and healthy relationships with an artificial ongoing and insatiable quest for things and the money to buy them with little regard for the true utility of what is bought.¹⁹ This is the negative side of consumerism.

On the positive side, consumerism can help society to become well-organised and united. The society with the help of consumerism can reduce gap between poor and rich, educated and uneducated.

RELATION WITH ECONOMY

The whole economy revolves for and around consumer. Consumerism is becoming the hallmark of most world economies. In the west, it is a common phenomenon, but now even developing countries in the world are resorting to it. Even in India the fate of consumerism is rising. Consumerism rests on the assumption that the economy will grow and grow forever. The dictum of consumerism and capitalism dictates that the social goods come through subtle

¹⁷ Available at <http://www.lakeproject.net/download/India/Consumer%20Law/Concept%20of%20Consumerism%20in%20India.%20Judicial%20Attitude.pdf>

¹⁸ Available at http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/education_materials/modules/consumption_and_the_consumer_society.pdf

greed and meeting the demands of people.²⁰ But infinite growth is incompatible with a finite planet and finite resources.

It is necessary that consumerism must not lead to depletion of economy. For this consumerism must be associated with the idea of sustainable development. It requires using present resources in such a way that future generation can also enjoy benefits of them. There must be need and not greed. This concept exists in India but the need is to associate consumerism with it.

RELATION WITH ENVIRONMENT

Environmentalism has an important relation with consumerism. It is a cause which extends far beyond consumerism.²¹ Increasing production and consumption beyond a point does not improve the fulfilment of basic needs nor does it result in greater happiness.²² Consumption can affect the environment in many ways: higher levels of consumption (and therefore higher levels of production) require larger inputs of energy and material and generate larger quantities of waste by products. Increased extraction and exploitation of natural resources, accumulation of waste and concentration of pollutants can damage the environment and, on the long run, limit economic activity. Consumerism or excessive consumption can even do worse as long as it determines an increase in the amount of purchased goods.²³

Consumerism must not be promoted at the instance of environment. It is necessary to understand that once environment depleted, consumerism will soon be destroyed. It is essential that consumption is given the central place in all programmes of sustainability.²⁴ This will ensure that consumption is sustainable which means “the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so

²⁰ Sheetal Kapoor, *Consumer And The Market*, Indian Institute Of Public Administration, New Delhi (2008 Edition), p. 20

²¹ Available at <http://www.econ.umn.edu/library/mnpapers/1972-17.pdf>

²² Pranab Banerji, *Environment And Consumer: A Global Quest For Sustainable Consumption*, Indian Institute Of Public Administration, New Delhi (2008 Edition), p. 17

²³ Available at http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Carlo_Orecchia/publication/24125654_Consumerism_and_environment_does_consumption_behaviour_affect_environmental_quality/links/0c96051fbbe7e6881f000000.pdf?inViewer=true&pdfJsDownload=true&&origin=publication_detail&inViewer=true

²⁴ Pranab Banerji, *Environment And Consumer: A Global Quest For Sustainable Consumption*, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi (2008 Edition), p.16

as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations”²⁵. Various attempts have been made UNCSO, Johannesburg Plan, World Bank etc to ensure sustainable consumption in and around the world.

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM ON CONSUMERISM

This part discusses various case laws which show how much active judiciary has been to protect the rights of consumers and promoting consumerism.

In *Bhupesh Khurana & Others v. Vishwa Budha Parishad*, while expanding the scope of Consumer Law, National Commission opened new doors in and others that imparting education falls within the ambit of service as defined under Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The National Commission is entrusted with the responsibility of protecting consumer interest and for that it can create awareness.

In *Vasantha P. Nair v. Smt. V.P. Nair*,²⁶ the National Commission upheld the decision of the Kerala State Commission which said that a patient is a “consumer” and the medical assistance was a “service” and, therefore, in the event of any deficiency in the performance of medical service, the consumer courts can have the jurisdiction. It was further observed that the medical officer’s service was not a personal service so as to constitute an exception to the application of the Consumer Protection Act. The controversy has been set at rest and the Supreme Court in its landmark decision in *Indian Medical Association v. V.P. Shantha & Others*. The court has held that patients aggrieved by any deficiency in treatment, from both private clinics and Govt. hospitals, are entitled to seek damages under the Consumer Protection Act.

In *Sankar v. B. M. Vijaya Bank*,²⁷ it was held that dishonor of a cheque without justification amounts to deficiency in service. The O.P. who dishonored the cheque issued by the complainant was held liable to pay compensation for the same.

In *Punjab National Bank v. K.B. Shetty*,²⁸ the complainant hired a bank locker. Due to the negligence of the bank, the locker was found open and ornaments kept therein were found

²⁵ Definition proposed by Oslo Symposium in 1994.

²⁶ III (1995) C.P.J. 1 (S.C.)

²⁷ I (1996) C.P.J. 137 (Karnataka, S.C.D.R.C.)

²⁸ III (1995) C.P.J. 256

missing. It was held that the consumer forum has jurisdiction in such a case and the bank would be liable for negligence.

In *Union of India v. Ashok Kumar Singh*, the train timings were changed, according to the established railway practice. The complainant, an advocate, who had purchased 1st class tickets from Saharsa to Hazipur by Hariharnath Express missed the train. The National Commission held that the complainant, being an educated person, was negligent in watching his interest and enquiring from the enquiry, as new timings were to come into force. The order of the State Commission holding the Railways liable was set aside.

In *Anil Gupta v. General Manager, Northern Railways*,²⁹ the complainant had booked two 2nd Class A.C. berths, but no reservation was available to the complainants for that day for which the berths were booked. That was held to be deficiency in service by the Railways and a compensation amounting to Rs. 2,000/- was allowed for the discomfort and mental agony caused thereby.

In *Bhupinder Singh v. AIR India*, the complainant got a confirmed ticket from the O.P. for 3-4-1993 from Delhi to Toronto in Canada. Due to the strike by the employees of the O.P., i.e., Air India, the flight did not take off on that day. The complainant thereafter was booked for another flight scheduled for 15-4-93, but by that time the fares had increased and the complainant was required to pay excess fare. It was held that charging excess fare in this case amounted to deficiency in service and the complainant was held entitled to the refund of excess fare charged from him.

In *HDFC Bank Limited v. Balwinder Singh*,³⁰ the complaint was of the bank, or its loan recovery agent, employing musclemen to take forcible repossession of the hypothecated vehicle and thus causing physical harassment and mental trauma to the complainant. The District Forum allowed the complaint and directed the bank to pay compensation of Rs. 4 Lakh for repossessing the vehicle in this manner and reselling it to a third party. The State Commission confirmed the order in appeal. Dealing with the bank's revision petition, the National Commission expressed shock that the bank had hired musclemen directly or through its recovery agents to recover the loan/repossess the vehicle. The Commission also referred to the State Commission's order, which had observed that the alleged letter produced by the

²⁹ Decided on November 6, 1990

³⁰ III (2009) CPJ 40 (NC)

bank purporting to the complainant voluntarily handing over possession of the vehicle was unreliable and that no notice was given to the complainant at the stages of repossession and sale of vehicle. The Commission relied upon its judgment in *Citicorp Maruti Finance Limited v. S. Vijayalaxmi*³¹ where it had strongly deprecated such practices. The Commission dismissed the petition and awarded Rs. 25,000/- as exemplary costs in this case.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Where consumerism is seen as policy of protecting consumer rights it is required to be developed. In spite of the enactment of various laws for protecting the consumer, there has been no effective deterrent against the production and sale of spurious goods which continue to flood the markets. In the face of enormity of consumer problems, numerous consumer oriented legislation were enacted. But the enforcement and implementation of these machineries are inadequate.

Consumers are a vulnerable group, more so in a developing country with the prevalence of mass poverty and illiteracy. India too is no exception to it. Instances like overcharging, black marketing, adulteration, profiteering, lack of proper services in trains, telecommunication, water supply, airlines, etc are not uncommon here. Rise of e-commerce has also given rise to unfair practices. Unless the consumer is educated enough, he cannot protect himself. For this it is necessary that consumerism must be promoted, so that a movement which led to consumer education can be ensured but when consumerism is seen in terms of excessive attachment to material possessions, it is necessary to set a limit. This is so because, such kind of consumerism will lead to distortion of individual, society, culture and environment, especially in a country like India which is full of values. For this it is also important to create awareness and knowledge. At last it can be said that, Consumerism has to go miles ahead. In this time, it will be necessary that positive meaning of consumerism is brought about.

“Amidst of an active propaganda machinery, controlled by the world's largest corporations constantly reassuring that consumerism is the path to happiness, governmental restraint of market excess is the cause our distress, and economic globalization is both a historical inevitability and a boon to the human species, a consumer is a shopper who is sore about...”

- David Edward.

³¹ III (2007) CPJ 161 (NC)