



Question 1: Why are rules and regulations required in the marketplace? Illustrate with a few examples.

Answer: Rules and regulations are required in the marketplace to protect consumers. Sellers often abdicate responsibility for a low-quality product, cheat in weighing out goods, add extra charges over the retail price, and sell adulterated/ defective goods. Hence, rules and regulations are needed to protect the scattered buyers from powerful and fewer producers who monopolise markets. For example, a grocery shop owner might sell expired products, and then blame the customer for not checking the date of expiry before buying the items.

Question 2: What factors gave birth to the consumer movement in India? Trace its evolution?

Answer: The factors that gave birth to the consumer movement in India are manifold. It started as a "social force" with the need to protect and promote consumer interests against unfair and unethical trade practices. Extreme food shortages, hoarding, black marketing and adulteration of food led to the consumer movement becoming an organised arena in the 1960s. Till the 1970s, consumer organisations were mostly busy writing articles and holding exhibitions. More recently, there has been an upsurge in the number of consumer groups who have shown concern towards ration shop malpractices and overcrowding of public transport vehicles. In 1986, the Indian government enacted the Consumer Protection Act, also known as COPRA. This was a major step in the consumer movement in India.

Question 3: Explain the need for consumer consciousness by giving two examples.

Answer: There is a need for consumer consciousness so that the buyers themselves can take action against cheating traders. The ISI and Agmark logos are certifications of good quality. Consumers must look for such certifications while buying goods and services. Secondly, to be able to discriminate and make informed choices, a consumer needs to have an adequate knowledge of the goods or services purchased by him/her.

Question 4: Mention a few factors which cause exploitation of consumers.

Answer: Exploitation of consumers is caused by a variety of factors. Producers are always looking for easy ways to increase profits. Adulterated or low-quality goods have less production costs, and if the consumer is unaware or illiterate, it is easy to cheat him/her. Also, shopkeepers brush off their responsibility by claiming that the manufacturer is to blame. Consumers feel helpless in this situation. Often, when the consumers are known not to check the retail price of a commodity on its packing, sellers add extra charges to the same. In places where there is no awareness of consumer rights and the COPRA, consumer exploitation is rampant.

Question 5: What is the rationale behind the enactment of Consumer Protection Act 1986?

Answer: The rationale behind the enactment of Consumer Protection Act of 1986 is to protect the consumer against unethical and unfair trade practices. Also, it recognises the consumer's right

to be informed, right to choose, right to seek redressal and right to represent himself/herself in consumer courts.

Question 6: Describe some of your duties as consumers if you visit a shopping complex in your locality.

Answer: Some of my duties as a consumer if I visit a shopping complex include checking expiry dates of the products I wish to purchase, paying only the maximum retail price printed on the goods, preventing shopkeepers from duping me with defective products, and registering a complaint with a consumer forum or court in case a seller refuses to take responsibility for an adulterated or flawed product.

Question 7: Suppose you buy a bottle of honey and a biscuit packet. Which logo or mark you will have to look for and why?

Answer: While buying a bottle of honey or a biscuit packet, the logo or mark one will have to look for is ISI or Agmark. These are logos certifying the quality of goods in the market. Only those producers are allowed to use these marks who follow certain quality standards set by the organisations issuing these certifications. Thus, if a bottle of honey or a biscuit packet has one of these logos on it, then it implies that the product is of good quality.

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