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RURAL YOUTH AND RURAL ADULT AWARENESS TOWARDS CONSUMER PROTECTION IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The article tries to find out the level of rural youth and rural adult awareness towards consumer protection in Cuddalore district. One objective of this study is reached through proper methodology. Sample size is 1066 in all obtained through stratified simple random sampling technique in Cuddalore district. Researcher designed questionnaire is with 5 point scale in the continuum of agreeing. Reliability of this tool is 0.88. It is identify from the analysis that the rural youth and rural adult consumers are having medium level of awareness about the consumer protection awareness with respect to gender, education qualification and occupation of the consumers. It is recommended that the consumers should involve acquiring awareness about the consumer protection movements, voluntary consumer organization should motivate the consumers about the consumer awareness and the respected State and Central Government should also conduct the awareness programmes about the consumer

awareness in various dimensions at rural areas in India. It is concluded that Government must interfere and reform the Consumer Protection Centre and make suitable changes to enhance its effectiveness of creating awareness among the rural youth and rural adult consumers in Cuddalore District.

KEYWORDS: Rural Youth and Rural Adult, Consumers Awareness, Consumer Protection.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer protection awareness in India is growing. Many sellers even do not response to the genuine grievance of consumers and many products fails to satisfy the requisite quality and safety standards. Due to all these consumer have been more aware of the policies and practices of business houses in the recent years than ever before. Consumers are organizing themselves for the protection of their interests. Such a move to better the protection offered to the consumer is called “consumerism”, which in other word is also called consumers protection awareness. In simple words consumer protection is a form of social action which is created to attain the well being of consumers. In this context it is necessary that the various groups of society such as Government, Judiciary, and Voluntary Associations of consumers play their role to protect and promote the consumer-interests – economic, social, and environmental. The article tries to find out the rural youth and rural adult awareness towards consumer protection awareness in Cuddalore district.

Review of Literature

Akram (1994) in his study entitled “Consumer protection in India under the shadow of legislations” described that the consumerism in our country has not yet reached the take off stage. Because it is a large number of Indian consumers are poor, illiterate, ignorant, ill-informed and unorganised. In order to check this state of affairs, it is important to educate the consumers about their rights and the remedies available to them.

Gangadhar Das (1994) in his study entitled “Consumer protection and Assam” opined that the socio-economic environment such as low income level, inflation, lack of information, illiteracy and unawareness make the legislative provisions remain unused. Hence, the need is to instil consumer consciousness among the consumers to resist unfair business practices at the grass root level.

Pinjarkar (1994) in his study entitled “Consumer Protection in India” states that the Indian consumer has always been neglected in our economy. This is because of lack of literacy and

education among the consumers and they are exploited in many ways. In order to protect the consumers from all malpractices, consumers should be awakened, organised and educated to avoid their own victimization.

McGuire, Richard Nelson, et al. (2001) “An Evaluation of Consumer Protection Legislation: The 1962 Drug Amendments: A Comment”. In a recent article in this Journal, Peltzman (1973a) develops and implements a procedure to measure the losses to consumers that result from their lack of full knowledge regarding the quality of a new product. He then uses this procedure to assess the benefits and costs of the 1962 amendments to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act. The article has received a considerable amount of attention, and the conclusions and methodology have been touted in the popular press (Friedman 1973). While we admire Peltzman’s courage and ingenuity, we believe that his methodology is fundamentally flawed in several respects. We are concerned, therefore, that the conclusions are being given more credence than they are worth, and, more importantly, that a basically faulty methodology will be employed in future studies of this genre.

Sewanand (2012) has discussed in his study that to study the general awareness among consumer for consumer protection and specially awareness of provisions of Consumer Protection Act. It specifically studies the level of awareness with regard to procedural formalities to be completed while filing a complaint in consumer forum. It also explains the important theoretical points related to protection of consumer’s interest. For this purpose a sample of 50 respondents has been taken. Data has been collected through well structured questionnaire. Analysis and interpretation of data have shown very interesting, alarming and informative results and findings. At the end some recommendations have been given for strengthening the present setup.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The validity of any research depends upon accurate and adequate data. Hence, due care was given for collecting the required data for this study. The present study is based on descriptive study between awareness towards consumer protection awareness and consumer social demographic variables like gender, educational qualification and present occupation. The study is based on primary data as well as secondary data.

Research Gap

The existing researches have not focused on rural youth and rural adult awareness towards consumer protection awareness and its states the importance of research needs to identify interlink and integrated approach consumers' awareness towards consumer protection awareness among the rural youth and rural adult. None of the research shows the integrated approach of awareness towards consumer protection and further no research is conducted both in rural youth and rural adult together in Cuddalore district of Tamilnadu.

Statement of the Problem

Majority of the consumers in the study area are unaware about the implications in awareness towards consumer protection awareness. Most of the rural consumer live below the poverty line and therefore are busy just keeping themselves alive. They mere struggle for survival uses up all their energy. They have neither the time nor the inclination to think of their rights. The literate and educated consumer feels helpless before the might of the exploiters and therefore acquiesces to condition.

Objective of the Study

- To find out the rural youth and rural adult awareness towards consumer protection in Cuddalore District.

Hypothesis of the Study

- There is no significant difference among education of rural youth and rural adult consumers based on level of awareness towards consumer protection.
- There is no significant difference between marital status of rural youth and rural adult consumers with respect to level of awareness towards consumer protection.
- There is no significant difference among occupation of rural youth and rural adult consumers with respect to level of awareness towards consumer protection.

Sample Design

For collecting primary data, field survey technique was undertaken in the study area. First-hand information pertaining to the awareness towards consumer protection awareness and the data were collected from rural youth and adult consumers in Cuddalore district.

Sample Size

Under the provisional census report 2011, the rural population of Cuddalore district is 17,18,249 which is around 66.06 percent of the total population 2600880. The population has

been stratified into two heads, viz., rural youth and rural adult by using simple random basis. In the seven taluks of Cuddalore District of the respondents were drawn from the two heads at the rate of 533 each and total of 1066 by using the following standard sampling size calculation for finite population.

Interview Schedule Design

The primary data has been collected from the respondents by using tools of interview schedule. Interview schedule contained questions regarding the personal data such as gender, educational qualification and occupation. Five point scaling technique has been used for finding the awareness of consumer protection awareness.

Tools of data collection

By virtue of mass data obtained from survey research, as well as data of secondary sources collected and presented in the thesis, a descriptive was done, since it is considered as most appropriate for the study. The research problem, interview schedule were all framed accordingly. The suggestions offered in the final chapter of the research report emerged from the inferences drawn by using simple statistical analysis among the data collected from the selected sample respondents.

Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha of all the selected factors are having above 0.88 and the study is reliable to do the analysis. Further, the result of Cronbach's alpha revealed that the study has good validity to explore the results.

Period of Study

The primary data were collected from November 2012 to April 2013 among the selected sample respondents in the study area.

Limitations of the Study

The study is confined to Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu with the sample of 1066 rural consumers. Many of the respondents are indifferent and unwilling to response. They do not maintain proper records for their economic data and utilization of consumer protection centers and consumer forums. Therefore the information rendered by them is found biased and necessary cross verification was made to reduce the biased information.

Table shows Educational Qualification and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Protection.

Educational Qualification	Youth			Adult		
	Mean	SD	F-value	Mean	SD	F-value
No Formal Education	21.14	3.93	14.083*	22.05	5.59	1.011 NS
Elementary School level	20.21	4.42		22.10	4.85	
Middle School	22.39	5.27		21.65	4.91	
High School	21.98	5.12		22.09	4.15	
Higher Secondary	22.09	4.97		23.69	4.98	
Under Graduate	23.75	3.13		22.12	5.25	

Source: Primary data

H₀: There is no significant difference among educational qualification of rural youth with respect to rural adult consumers and level of awareness towards consumer protection awareness.

From the above table, it is stated that the awareness towards consumer protection awareness is measured according to educational qualification among rural youth and adult consumers. It is identified that the under graduate educated consumers are having more (23.75) awareness in youth category. On the other hand, the respondents with higher secondary qualified are having more (23.69) awareness about consumer protection awareness in adult category. The 'F' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in youth category and is accepted in adult category of educational qualification and hence, there exists significant difference between rural youth with end without educational qualification in awareness level about consumer protection awareness there is no significant difference in rural adult consumers.

Table shows Marital Status and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Protection.

Marital status	Youth			Adult		
	Mean	SD	Z-value	Mean	SD	Z-value
Married	23.01	3.10	2.089*	22.16	5.05	1.460 NS
Unmarried	22.11	4.86		20.50	4.73	

Source: Primary data

H₀ :There is no significant difference between marital status of rural youth and rural adult consumers based on level of awareness towards consumer protection awareness.

It is observed from the above table that the awareness towards consumer protection awareness is measured according to marital status among rural youth and adult consumers. It

is identified that married (23.01) consumers are having more awareness than unmarried (22.11) in youth category. In the case of adult consumers, married respondents are having more (22.16) awareness about consumer protection awareness than unmarried (20.50) in the study area. The 'z' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in youth category and accepted in adult category of marital status and hence, there is a significant difference in awareness level because of marital status about consumer protection awareness among the rural youth and adult consumers.

Table shows Occupation and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Protection.

Occupation	Youth			Adult		
	Mean	SD	F-value	Mean	SD	F-value
Government Employee	22.95	5.69	6.522*	23.90	3.70	11.616*
Private employee	23.31	3.33		22.51	5.22	
Business	22.19	4.60		20.65	4.35	
Agriculturist	21.39	4.70		22.27	5.31	
Housewife	22.47	5.71		22.89	5.08	
Student	21.08	5.38		22.14	6.23	
Daily wages	21.86	4.69		21.81	4.54	

Source: Primary data

H₀: There is no significant difference among occupation of rural youth and rural adult consumers with respect to level of awareness towards consumer protection.

It is inferred from the above table that the awareness towards consumer protection awareness is measured according to occupation among rural youth and adult consumers. It is identified that private employee are having more (23.31) awareness in youth category. On the other hand, government employee are having more (23.90) awareness about consumer protection awareness in adult category. The 'F' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in both youth and adult category of occupation and hence, there is a significant difference between occupation and awareness level about consumer protection awareness among the rural youth and adult consumers.

Findings of the study

- It is noted from the analysis that 'F' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in youth category and is accepted in adult category of educational qualification and hence, there is a significant difference exists between educational qualification and awareness level about consumer protection awareness in rural youth and there is no significant difference in rural adult consumers.

- It is found from the analysis that 'z' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in youth category and accepted in adult category of marital status and hence, there is a significant difference exists between marital status and awareness level about consumer protection awareness among the rural youth and adult consumers.
- It could be found from the analysis that 'F' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in both youth and adult category of occupation and hence, there is a significant difference between occupation and awareness level about consumer protection awareness among the rural youth and adult consumers.

Recommendations of the Study

- It is observed from the analysis that the rural youth and rural adult consumers are having medium level of awareness about the consumer protection awareness. Therefore the consumers should involve acquiring awareness about the consumer protection movements, voluntary consumer organization should motivate the consumers about the consumer awareness and the respected State and Central Government should also conduct the awareness programmes about the consumer awareness in various dimensions at rural areas in India.
- Government must interfere and reform the Consumer Protection Centre and make suitable changes to enhance its effectiveness of creating awareness among the rural youth and rural adult consumers in Cuddalore District.

CONCLUSION

It is observed from the analysis that the rural youth and rural adult consumers are having medium level of awareness about the consumer protection. It is recommended that the consumers should involve acquiring awareness about the consumer protection movements, voluntary consumer organization should motivate the consumers about the consumer awareness and the respected State and Central Government should also conduct the awareness programmes about the consumer awareness in various dimensions at rural areas in India. It is concluded that Government must interfere and reform the Consumer Protection Centre and make suitable changes to enhance its effectiveness of creating awareness among the rural youth and rural adult consumers in Cuddalore District.

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