

Consumer Awareness Among Engineering College Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study is entitled as “Consumer awareness among the engineering college students”. Consumer awareness is an act of making sure the consumer is aware of the information about the products, goods, services and consumer rights. Consumer awareness is closely related to the students especially engineering students. The research was a survey type which consists of stratified representative sample of 410 engineering students from Thoothukudi district. The investigator has constructed and standardized the consumer awareness inventory and personal data sheet was developed. The interpretation of data was done with statistical methods in mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ test.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness and Engineering Students

INTRODUCTION

A consumer is a person who buys any goods or hires any service for valuable consideration. The term does not include a person who obtains goods or services for resale or for any commercial purpose. Goods may be consumables like wheat flour, salt, sugar, fruit etc. or durable items like television, refrigerator, toaster, mixer, bicycle etc. Services refer to items like electricity, cooking gas, telephone, transportation, film show etc. Normally, it is the consumption or use of goods and services that makes the person to be called as ‘consumer’. But in the eyes of law, both the person who buys any goods or hires any service for consideration and the one who uses such goods and services with the approval of the buyer are termed as consumers. Consumer awareness refers to the being consciousness of having knowledge about the various consumer production laws, redress mechanism and consumer rights which include right to protection of health and safety from goods and services.

It has been observed that the people for, whom various schemes have been taken up by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), in fact, do not get benefit as expected. This is mainly because they are not fully aware of these schemes and their benefits. Also, only knowledgeable and alert consumers aware of their rights and responsibilities can protect themselves effectively. The need of the hour is, therefore, to educate the common consumers particularly those in rural areas who are more susceptible to exploitation. Once

they are educated and made aware of the schemes that have been drawn up for their benefit and also the redressed forum that is available, the benefit of various schemes, in true sense, will reach the common consumers of the country. It is, therefore, our bounden duty to play our part jointly and effectively in disseminating various schemes to the common consumers of the country. In this regard, the role of the voluntary consumer organizations, consumer activists, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and media cannot be ignored.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The process of development along with the expanding globalisation and liberalisation process has increased the number of consumer related issues. Consumer protection has earned an important place in the political, economic and social agendas of many nations. In India, the Government has taken many steps including legislative, to protect consumers. Education is a life long process of constantly acquiring relevant information, knowledge and skills. Consumer education is an important part of this process and is a basic consumer right that must be introduced at the school level. Consumers by definition include all citizens who are, by and large the biggest group, who are affected by almost all government, public or private decisions. The most important step in consumer education is awareness of consumer rights. However, consumer education is incomplete without the responsibilities and duties of consumers, and this influences individual behaviour to a great extent.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Consumer - refers to someone who purchases a good for Personal use or receives services.

Awareness- refers to the conscious knowledge and understanding.

Engineering students- refers to those who are studying engineering colleges in Thoothukudi district.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The variables involved in the study are as follows:

Dependent Variable

Consumer awareness

Independent variables

1. Sex : Male / Female
2. College locality : Rural / Urban

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To measure the Consumer Awareness of Engineering College Students in Madurai district.

2. To find out whether there is a significant difference in Consumer Awareness of Engineering College Students in terms of select independent variables viz., Sex, College locality.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is a significant difference in Consumer Awareness of Engineering College Male and Female students.
2. There is a significant difference in Consumer Awareness of Engineering College Students college locality between Rural and Urban.

METHODOLOGY- IN- BRIEF

Method: Normative , **Technique :** Survey

Sample

A stratified representative sample of 410 Engineering College students from Thoothukudi district was constituted as the sample of the study.

Tools used

1. General Information Sheet.
2. Consumer Awareness Inventory constructed and standardized by the Investigator.

Statistical Treatment

1. ' t ' -test between the means of large independent sample was employed.

STUDIES RELATED TO CONSUMER AWARENESS

Dave Skelsey (2009) did his work under the title, "Consumer awareness of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. The study was focused on the aim of To study effect of occupation and education of female on consumer awareness regarding house hold goods and Services Consumerism is as old as man, who did not know then how to produce, but was endowed with plenty by Mother Nature to discover, use and consume. The ancient consumer moved from place to place to hunt for food. He ate whatever he could find such as fruits, nuts, berries, sweet roots and the flesh of animals. He made use of wood and dry leaves from forests to make fire to keep him warm and also to tenderize the meat he hunted. It was purely by accident that man discovered that food could be grown by sowing seeds. This marked the beginning of man as a producer. Many such discoveries followed as he began to satisfy more of his needs with the resources around him. However he needed to stay at one place to look after his produce. Gradually he realized that he could not manage production on his own. So, he began to socialize and take the help of others around him. This led to group living, which resulted in sharing of goods with others, and exchange of services. The importance of consumer education is highlighted when the consumers are seen as part of the economy. Consumer plays a vital role in functioning of the economy. The circular flow of money from

consumers and back to consumers in base of economy. It is the consumer who provides for the production of goods in form of land, capital and human resources. Consumer education also helps in making wise choices. In developing countries it becomes all the more important because there is variety of products and there is little control over standards. Consumers get cheated in several ways. Lack of awareness of consumer regarding their rights is another reason why they should be armed with proper education about their rights. They need to be alert and cautious, well informed against the various misleading tactics of the market. Findings: Mehsana city was selected for the purpose of investigation, which is situated in the north zone of "Gujarat State". This city is far away 75k.m.from the Ahmedabad city which is metropolitan city of the Gujarat State. Mehsana city is most popular for trading business for agricultural product. Now a day's industrial zone also developed rapidly. The economic status is higher. The educational facilities also increasing so the area was selected for investigation to judging influencing factors on selected particular study. Sample was selected on the bases of variables of the study. The sample was selected from different wards of the Mehsana decided by municipality distribution. The size of the sample was 192 only. Purposive random sampling technique was used for selection of sample. Female as a sample of the study, those female who were service women & home makers. Research design was the plan structure and strategies of the investigation. From the design investigator conceived answered obtained from the decided standardize research tool. The investigator used interview method to explore the 192-selected household in Mehsana city. Descriptive research design was considered in the present study. It shows consumer awareness regarding household goods. Their buying and awaring about consumer protection, label awareness, effect of advertisement and standardize mark. The questionnaire was standardized by experts in the field of particular study. The tool was standardize by split half method the reliability of the tool was $r = 0.85$ so it was excellent to accept the tool for judgment. The respondent had divided into two occupations. That is homemaker and service in both occupation 50% respondents was available. The homemaker was a respondent only run the home and service class respondent were run the home and work out side. The occupation variable needs to judge the experiences of an individual.

Nitin Joshi, D. P. Mishra(2011) did their work under the title "Environment Friendly Car: A study of Consumer Awareness with special reference to Maharashtra State". The aim of the study is to understand the behavior of the customer in the state of Maharashtra which is one of the most developed states of India. The study is being carried out to understand the customer awareness on environment friendly car (EFC). The objective of the study is to understand the awareness levels and create awareness of the EFC so that the efforts of the manufacturing the green car will be achieved. SPSS version 17.0 has been used for analysis of the data. 500 respondents have been asked to fill in a questionnaire. The study has been done keeping in mind age group and the geographical area of the respondents. With reference to the age group, it is observed that there is no significant difference in the awareness levels but with reference to the geography, it is observed that there is a significant difference in the awareness levels with reference to the EFC. Findings: The Indian automotive industry is witnessing a trend of volume growth, which has been defying all seasonality trends of the

past. This is reflecting the structural change in customer patterns driven by the strong economic performance adding strength to the income levels of the urban as well as rural customers. The volume growth (Pandey, 2010) of the industry as on Sep 2010 has been around 26% with the passenger car segment growing at the rate of 34% approx. and commercial vehicle segment growing at 45% approximately leading the way. The robust growth across the segment has led to demand surpassing supply in all major segments with suppliers facing acute capacity shortages. The surprising and heartening trend can be ascertained from the fact that despite the OEMs having raised prices in response to higher commodity prices and newer emission norms, demand growth has not been deterred. One business area which has a good share in the economy of a country is the Automobile sector where environmental issues have received a great deal of discussion in the popular and professional press. Terms like "Green Car" and "Environmental friendly car" appear frequently in the press. This is one sector of the industry which takes care into account everything right from the idea generation to customer delight. It includes the production process, the raw material, the consumption and the disposal. It has been observed there is a lot of scope to make the product greener and the production process cleaner.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Consumer Awareness among Engineer College Students

The average score of Consumer Awareness among Engineering College Students is found to be 30.32, while the theoretical average is 20. This shows that the Consumer Awareness among Engineering College Students is above the average level.

HYPOTHESIS 1

There is a significant difference in Consumer Awareness of Engineering College Male and Female students.

The statistical measures and results of test of significance of difference between the mean scores of Consumer Awareness of Engineering College Students: Sex-wise are presented in

Table 1.

TABLE 1 :RESULTS OF TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN SCORES OF CONSUMER AWARENESS OF STUDENTS: SEX-WISE.

Variable	Sub-category	Number of students	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	Significance at 0.05 level
Sex	Male	291	30.75	4.48	3.305	Significant
	Female	119	29.26	3.99		

The obtained value 3.305 is greater than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is a significant difference between Male and Female Arts and Engineering College students in Consumer Awareness. **Hence the hypothesis is accepted.** It can be inferred from the above finding that the Male students are found higher than the female students in possession of Consumer Awareness.

HYPOTHESIS 2

There is a significant difference in Consumer Awareness of Engineering College Students college locality between Rural and Urban.

The statistical measures and results of test of significance of difference between the mean scores of Consumer Awareness of Students: College locality-wise are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2 : RESULTS OF TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN SCORES OF CONSUMER AWARENESS OF STUDENTS: COLLEGE LOCALITY –WISE.

Variable	Sub-category	Number of students	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	Significance at 0.05 level
College locality	Rural	185	30.77	4.26	0.088	Not Significant
	Urban	225	30.73	4.19		

The obtained value 0.088 is lesser than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is no significant difference between the college locality of rural and urban in Consumer Awareness of Engineering College students. **Hence the hypothesis is rejected.** It can be inferred from the above finding that college locality does not influence of consumer awareness.

CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions emerged out of the personal study are as follows

1. The Consumer Awareness of Engineering College students are above the average level.
2. Engineering College students' Consumer Awareness is found independent of the variable - College Locality.
3. Engineering College students' Consumer Awareness is found dependent of the variable-Sex.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Promote General Awareness of the rights of the consumer by encouraging consumer education and supplying information.

2. Publish periodical and product specific booklets, pamphlets, cassettes, CDs, slides, documentary films and other devices of mass communication for promoting consumer awareness in English and regional languages, highlighting the problem in specified areas like real estate, public utilities, non-banking financial agencies etc.
3. Enlighten the business community on its ethical and legal obligations to maintain quality of the products or services and to be transparent in dealing with consumers.
4. Encourage consumer activities to strengthen the existing institutional set up of consumer dispute redressed by acting as a facilitator between consumer and the institution.
5. Study the available legal remedies, analyze and suggest new measures for the effective and better consumer protection.
6. Bring together the consumer, traders and policy makers to exchange information of mutual interest for better coordination. Bring together the NGO's/Consumer activities operating in different areas and equip them with suitable and required information and knowledge to enable them to act as nodal agents of change in rural areas.
7. Organize and conduct seminars, workshops and group discussions and thus provide a platform for threadbare discussion of the issues and evolve suitable remedial action. Conduct motivational campaigns for groups of potential customers both in urban and rural areas.
8. Coordinate programmes organized by Central and State Governments, State Legal Aid Authorities, Academic Institutes, National and International Consumer Organizations.
9. Periodic interaction with electronic & print media on success stories of consumers.
10. Establish links with educational institutions like universities, colleges, high schools to emphasize the need for improving consumer education in the curriculum.
11. Interact with national level organizations like NISIET, NIRD, ASCI etc. to explore possible collaboration and organize awareness programmes for their clientele and undertake research projects.

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