



Comparative Utilization of Different Consumer Rights By Women Consumers

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Introduction:—There are so many consumer rights provided under Consumer Protection Act such as the right to information, the right to be heard, the right to redressal, the right to safety, the right to choose, the right to consumer education and the right to a healthy environment. But the consumers are neither aware nor utilize these rights equally. Here the question arises as to why consumers are not equally aware or utilize the consumer rights.

There might be numerous reasons behind it. Either the channels through which information regarding consumer right is imparted, may not be giving equal emphasis to all consumer right. It may also be possible that consumer finds some right difficult to understand and for others difficult to access. Thus, to find answers of the above raised question, present study was conducted with following objectives:

- i- To study level of awareness about consumer rights among women consumers.
- ii- To find out the extent of utilization of consumer rights by women consumers

Research methodology:—The present study was conducted in Palanpur city of Gujarat State since it is the district headquarters and centre of purchasing for consumers of nearby village. A representative sample of 200 women consumers, from 14 different wards were selected by following a proportionate random sampling procedure. Personal interview technique was used for collection of data.

For determining extent of utilization of consumer rights, respondents, response were recorded on three point scale and an open ended list of inventory with all possible constraints was developed to determine the perceived constraints with respect to its utilization. Frequency, percentage and ranks were calculated for studying the utilization and constraints faced by women consumers in utilizing their consumer rights.

Result and Discussion:—It can be inferred from the table below that amongst various rights, the highest level of awareness is found for 'the right to choose' followed by 'the right to information' and 'the right to safety'. Least awareness

was found of 'the right to redressal'. (See Table - 1)

Result is supported by the findings of Grover and Gupta (1993) who also revealed that respondents were mostly aware of their 'right to choose' and 'right to safety' where as all of them were ignorant of 'right to be informed' and 'right to be heard'.

It can be inferred from the score values give in Table 1.2 that the majority of respondents were found to be utilizing 'the right to information' because curiosity is in human nature. Thus, to satisfy their curious mind the consumers frequently ask questions regarding validity of quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard or price of the product they plan to buy (See Table - 2)

The next ranked right is 'the right to choose' the reason being access to variety of products in the market at competitive price and quality. So, the women consumers choose amongst the variety of product mostly on basis of price followed by quality.

The right to safety is ranked third in utilization because the consumers were found asking for safety only, after choosing the product. It was found that 'right to redressal' and 'the right to health and environment' were least utilized by women consumers since majority were not aware of it.

Finding is supported by Narain (1991), who found that consumers are not sure whether any redressal will actually result.

Conclusion:—The findings show that the consumers are mostly aware of rights which are simple to understand and are utilizing those rights which are easy to access such as, right to information, choose and safety. The other rights which need deep understanding of complicated rules and procedures are less utilized by women.

This shows that consumers need to be educated more about the procedure of filing complaint and seeking redressal. Their complaints will be heard and will be taken care off. They need to be convinced that their efforts can bring change in society regarding consumer safety.

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Table: 1.1: Comparison of awareness level among respondents regarding different consumer rights
(n=200)

Sr. No.	Consumer right	Awareness Percentage*	Rank
1	Right to safety	75.33	III
2	Right to information	78.35	II
3	Right to choose	81.25	I
4	Right to be heard	73.56	V
5	Right to redressal	40.00	VIII
6	Right to consumer education	66.05	VI
7	Right to health and environment	61.00	IV
8	Certification marks	62.11	VII

* Utilization percentage is calculated on basis of utilization scores obtained

Table:1.2: Extent of utilization of different consumer rights
(n=200)

Sr. No.	Consumer right	Utilization Percentage*	Rank
1	Right to safety	66.00	III
2	Right to information	71.35	I
3	Right to choose	69.50	II
4	Right to be heard	41.00	VI
5	Right to redressal	39.66	VII
6	Right to consumer education	56.33	IV
7	Right to health and environment	38.31	VIII
8	Certification marks	42.97	V

* Utilization percentage is calculated on basis of utilization scores obtained

R E F E R E N C E

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