

A Case Study :

## Sudies on the consumer club in schools

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The term 'consumerism' is related to the modern consumer movement launched in 1960's by the concerns triggered by Rachel Carson and Ralph Nader's auto safety investigation and by President Kennedy's efforts to establish the rights of consumer. Thus consumerism is a movement directed to protect the consumers to ensure satisfaction that the consumer gets the best return in exchange for the money he spends. Dr James turner a close associate of Ralph Nader (1996) and leading consumer experts say that consumers are to economics what voters are to politics. He suggested that instead of banning cigarette production; educate the consumers on the ill effects so as to make them aware to decide for themselves that they do not want. This is based on premise that power flows from bottom to top that is from the people to the powers that be. The paper is intended to emphasize the need for consumerism and consumer education in this millennium. Consumers need a minimum level of knowledge and education to understand the information and to use it in the most appropriate way. There are rules and regulations to protect the consumers but they usually do not know the law. Consumer education focuses on themes of consumption and finances and the competences to manage everyday finances, consumption and provision for the future. It thus has economic, ecological, technical, legal, political, cultural, social and scientific dimensions. Consumer education empowers learners to know, understand, reflect and act in different consumption environments on the basis of individual and social needs. It starts with the individual's perspective as a consumer and aims to give people instruments to

make their own decisions about their consumption and to assume responsibility for those decisions.

When in 1963 President Kennedy of the United States proclaimed the basic consumer rights (the right to be heard, the right to know, the right to safety and the right to choose), he failed to mention Consumer education. It was in (1971) that President Johnson stressed the importance of consumer education when he said: "Consumer education is an integral part of consumer protection. It is vital if the consumer is to be able to make wise judgments in the marketplace. To enable him or her to do this will require a true educational process beginning in childhood and continuing on". In 1975 President Ford recognized the right to consumer education as the fifth consumer right: one without which consumers cannot gain the full benefit of the other four.

### *What is consumer education all about?"*

Before attempting to answer this question, we need to define what we mean by consumer education. For this purpose a broad definition is needed that encompasses both consumer rights and responsibilities. To begin with we can say that consumer education aims to change behavior. It is the process by which people are taught how to buy, use and dispose off, sometimes scarce, goods and services to fulfill their needs. Other definitions include objectives as well, such as the definition formulated in the classification of concepts in consumer education<sup>4</sup>. "Consumer education is the process of gaining the knowledge and skills in managing consumer resources and taking actions to influence the factors which affect consumer decisions."

In 1980, the US department of