

Research Paper :

Consumer awareness regarding selected aspects of consumerism

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was undertaken to assess the extent of awareness of consumer towards selected aspects of consumerism. Samples for the study comprised of 80 randomly selected respondents from different localities of Parbhani. The findings revealed that around 50 per cent of the consumers had high level of awareness regarding food adulteration, deceptive and misleading advertisement, consumer rights and responsibilities, sales promotion techniques and legal protection. Though difference in the mean awareness scores was observed between various groups of personal characteristics of consumers, statistically the difference was non significant in selected characteristics namely, age, family size and monthly income, education of the consumer etc.

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Key words : Consumer awareness, Fraudulent practices

Consumers are the largest economic group in any country and they are the central point of all the economic activities of a nation. But the very same consumers are the most voiceless group, especially in India (Swami, 1990). In highly developed economy of the west, consumerism is well developed and established with consumer movements wide spread and enough to be effective. On the other hand, in less developed countries, consumer movements are weak and poorly organized. Indian consumer is not only poor, apathetic and ignorant in general, but highly unaware of his rights and responsibilities as well. Swami Vivekanand also believed that the “consumer is the king” in the market who can purchase anything from any where (Seetharaman and Sethi, 2002). In reality consumer may be “King” of corporate activities but his “Kingdom” remains only on paper. Hence, today consumers are no longer safe against the fraudulent practices, in market there are several unfair and fraudulent practices which can play a havoc with the life of the consumers causing many health hazards. Hence, it is important to be aware of various deceptive techniques used by manufactures / sellers to lure the consumers to use the products/services. Therefore, an attempt was made in the present study to assess the extent of consumer awareness regarding selected aspects of consumerism with the help of awareness scale and correlate with selected personal characteristics of consumer.

METHODOLOGY

Assessment of consumer awareness regarding selected aspects of consumerism was carried out among randomly selected 80 respondents using the awareness scale developed by Murali *et al.* (2006). The scale was administered to the selected respondents personally and the consumers were asked to tick the correct answers for each item in the scale. After getting the responses, the tick marked factors were checked and correct answers were allotted with one mark while wrong answers were scored as zero. The total score was computed by summation method. Apart from calculating the percentage, frequency of the scores, correlation coefficient test was applied to find out the correlation of the awareness score regarding selected aspects of consumerism with selected personal characteristics of consumers (Garett and Woodworth, 1981).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the personal characteristics of selected consumers, it was found that majority of the consumers were in the age group ranging from 36-45 years (41.25%) having 1-4 members (50%) and 5-8 members (47.5%) in the family with a monthly income ranging from Rs.10000 - Rs.20000 (56.25%). The highest percentage of consumers was of graduates (52.5%) followed by post graduates (37.5%) living in nuclear family (61.25%). An equal percentage of male (50%) and female (50%).