



सो TULA ओ

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CONTENTS

From the Principal's Desk	-Dr. Pratibha Jolly
From the Convener's Desk	-Dr. Jayashree Pillai
From the Editorial's Board	
President's Note	-Jayam Singh Chauhan
Hybrid Seeds and Consumers Rights of the Farmers	-Ms. Pushpa Singh
How Are We Free to C H O O S E?	-Dr. Jayashree Pillai
Bottled	-Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda
A Transition from 'Customer' to 'Consumer'	-Garima
A Time-Saver : E- Commerce	-Aarzo Malik
Art of De-Consumerism & How to Master it?	-Medha Yadav
The Online Affair	-Shreya Vashishtha
An Aware Consumer	-Hanshi Mishra
Collective and Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu:	
Self-Sustained Consumers	-Dr. Dhruv Pande
Food Adulteration	-Jahnvi Kaushal
Feminism in the Capitalistic World	-Saloni Priya
How will Budget 2017 affect Consumers?	-V. Juhi Sai
Towards a 'Cash-Less' Consumer..?	-Oorja Tapan
Demystifying Hidden Labels	-Sarah Muneem
The Victorious Girl	-Garima
Education as Business	-Sonali Kale
मुबारक हो	-मृणालिनी कुमार
Consumer Behaviour	-Smriti Tejaswee
Safety-A Compulsion	-Ifrah Shafeeq Qadiri
Delusive Advertisements	-Ekta Binjola
'I shop therefore I am'.	-Samarpita Yashaswani
The Identity Paradox & Patents	-Mrinalini Kumar
Public Health, Ignorance and Lack of Awareness	-Madhu Chebrol
Environment: A Consumer's Abode	-Aishna Singh
उपभोक्तावाद	-नेहा कुमारी
Consumer's Benefit in Telecom War	-Chandni Jain
Lead in Paint: Possibilities of Chemical Hazards	-Preeti Kumari
The Supreme Court of India and Consumer Grievances	-Aastha Vidyasagar
जागो ग्राहक जागो	-पूजा शाह
उपभोक्ता की चिंता	-js.kq vjksM+k
Survey	
Report: 'Consumer Awareness'	-Yukti Gupta, Riddhi Mediratta

Cover Illustration by: Sakshee Singh, B.A. (H) Geography, Second Year

From the Principal's Desk

Dr. Pratibha Jolly

The glitter of the city lies in its market, the charm of life in the fast lane on the amenities and services it offers. The sense of power lies in the opportunity networks and the growth spirals. Cities incite social change and pull millions into their fold with the promise of haven at the next road bend. Global culture roots elite rituals and shapes new identities. Changing social dynamics and unbridled consumerism spur desire. All roads begin and end at the shimmering market place.



As urban spaces define benchmarks for development, indices of human progress and paradigms of contemporary culture, consumer practices are at the focus. The binary divides between the developed and the underdeveloped, the urban and the nonurban, the haves and the have-nots obligate us to look at issues of inclusion, access and equal opportunity. Human quest for understanding its own trajectory originates new debates on life in the market place and beyond; a new discourse on the concept of society and citizenship, the rights and responsibilities of the individual. It motivates revisits to the historical origins of civil society; and social, political and economic drivers of progress. It necessitates new frameworks for understanding development and gives birth to movements for enlightened citizenry. It demands bridging the chasm between theoretical understandings and community practice. It seeks reconciliation between individual desires and the goals of the collective. The new generations will be especially challenged by the times to craft a meaningful life in an interconnected interdependent world full of conflicting demands. They will have to create new paradigms to function in a new ecological balance for sustainable future of human kind.

At Miranda House, we strike a fine balance by embedding rigorous academic studies with the experiential. We encourage early exposure to the real world problems and engineer opportunities for pioneering change. *Tula* the Consumer Club at Miranda House was born from our desire to enlighten, empower and mould young students as responsible citizens capable of making well informed choices with clarity, and with responsibility, especially in the context of contemporary India. *Santulan*, the journal of *Tula*, provides a forum to engage with the outstanding challenges posed by the material world. Through rigorous case studies and insightful research, it aims to chronicle our contributions to the larger consumer movement. I am delighted to behold the present issue of *Santulan*. It is a pleasure to congratulate the anchoring team, both students and faculty, led by Dr. Jayashree Pillai for sustaining this project with unabated enthusiasm, sharp focus and immense hard work. Their dedication is to a profound cause that will shape not just lives but impact ultimately, our collective future.

Tula and its chronicle *Santulan* are very close to my heart. I am certain that in tandem, they will continue to surpass all expectations.

Pratibha Jolly



From the Convenor's Desk

Dr Jayashree Pillai

Tula – Miranda House Consumer Club

Tula came into being in February 2007. In our decade long, existence we have crossed many milestones and today we are one of the very few active consumer clubs in University of Delhi.

Since the beginning the motto of our college has been, *“Where Excellence is a Tradition.”* We at Tula have enhanced this vision by providing consumer education to our students and have lived up to this ideal.

Over the years we have been playing a pioneering role in developing consumer awareness and underlining rights and responsibilities through a series of workshops, talks, street-plays and other activities. Awareness will be a powerful tool, especially for young students as we are getting drawn into an increasing consumerist culture. Consumer education is the very foundation on which Tula has been built.



In our incessant effort to buy and accumulate things, consumers today have neglected concern for health or environment. This process has grown into threats for the very existence of the human race.

The lure of consumption is leading us to a never before scenario of wastage and pollution, at the cost of several traditional values. Sustainable consumption should be the preferred option. Development in harmony with nature and sustainable consumption only will lead to a better future, not reckless shopping for unnecessary things just to have the satisfaction of something fashionable or to fulfil our insatiable lust for accumulation.

I would like to thank all those who have had a role in bringing out the present issue of Santulan. Our Principal Dr. Pratibha Jolly has always been there for us, with her constructive inputs. A lot of work has gone into collecting, compiling and editing the articles. The editorial team of Garima, Medha and Sarah has done a great job under the guidance of faculty members Shruti Sharma and Pragya Pandey. It's through their effort that we have this issue of Santulan in our hands. The efforts made by Jayam, President of Tula, in leading her team has been exemplary. I would like also to mention the role played by members of Tula, both students and faculty, in keeping the consumer awareness movement alive both in the college and outside.

Tula is an open platform that brings us all together. We need to think more on consumer education, rights and responsibilities. Let us hope to bring about an attitude shift, not dictated by the consumerism, but motivated by awareness.

Thank you.

The Editorial Team at work



It gives us immense pleasure to bring out the latest edition of SANTULAN, the journal of TULA, Miranda House Consumer Club. In these contemporary times, we live in a world of consumerism, where people are swept up into the rat race to maximise their profits, where we as consumers are manipulated and cheated, by fraudulent tricksters who hide in plain sight even as we are hoodwinked. This edition tries to open up a reader's eye to a revelation of many consumer issues which we did not even think of. The existence of such practices in the society, we believe, demands our constant vigilance. But the bill always comes due. We demand such petty overlooked acts, to be noticed, questioned, and pointed out in order to stop the poisonous tree of 'evil market economy' from growing any further and by watering it with the 'purifying essence' of consumer consciousness.

SANTULAN is close to our hearts and it would not have been possible without the direction of our Principal, Dr. Pratibha Jolly. We would also like to extend our gratitude towards Dr. Jayashree Pillai, Convenor TULA, for being a source of constant inspiration to us. We are highly thankful to Ms. Shruti Sharma, Faculty Member TULA for constant support at every step and Dr. Pragya Pandey, for her unyielding guidance. We are deeply indebted to all of them to make SANTULAN possible. So at last, we present to you all a diverse selection of stimulating articles from our Professors, Scholars and Students, which we wish for you to be a delightful read.

Warm Regards

Editors:

Garima

Medha Yadav

Sarah Muneem



President's Note

Jayam Singh Chauhan B.A. Programme, Third Year

Greetings from TULA, Miranda House Consumer Club! It is a matter of great joy and pride for me as the President of TULA to announce the release of SANTULAN, our annual magazine. It has been my privilege to be the President of one of the only two consumer clubs in the ambit of Delhi University that deals with the variety of issues, the foremost of which is consumer education and awareness. The popularity and success of the club is reflected in the range of activities it performs and the enthusiastic participation each event garners.

Throughout the year, Tula has been engaged in organizing many events like the Cleanliness Drive, the Consumer Awareness Workshop along with a Mock Consumer Court. The more you engage, the more you will learn. Are you all consumers? The first major question with which my year in TULA started. The most exciting moments were the moments when we interacted with our juniors who shared their experiences and gave new ideas for celebrating consciousness about consumer awareness. The enthusiasm of my juniors and new members of the club have always geared me to work in a creative and productive way. The things which we all know but rarely practice like always taking receipts/bills; checking the tax charged on your goods and services, etc. are the result of participating in activities organized by TULA.

The most conducive discussions were the informal interactions that TULA Union usually had with its members, where we got to learn about the different types of exploitations- economic, social, environmental and the legal mechanisms to remedy these problems. The magic of working under TULA is that it provokes you to think, to criticize and to express ourselves as vigilant consumers.

A heartfelt thanks to the epitome of guidance, Dr. Jayashree Pillai, our convenor and Ms. Shruti Sharma, Faculty Member, both of whom have helped us at every step. Their guidance motivated me in developing myself as a responsible and capable person. I am grateful to the TULA Union- Medha, Ujjvala, Garima and all my friends who have helped me in organizing activities. We are on the road to achieving consumer satisfaction and being part of a fair society where both sellers and buyers engage in an equal exchange of goods and services.

I am indebted to the respected teachers and the TULA team for their hard work in the smooth release of the magazine and in taking forward the movement of consumer activism around us. Engaging in the activities and events of TULA is in itself a learning process. I hope all the members of TULA must have learnt through the journey of consumer awareness. **Be Aware, Be Empowered, Be the part of TULA!**

I, on behalf of TULA would like to sincerely thank, Mr. Ankit Khurana, Consultant Excise & Service Tax from Tax Advisors Zone (ankitkhurana7@gmail.com) to contribute partially for this magazine



Hybrid Seeds and Consumers Rights of the Farmers

Pushpa Singh

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

Introduction

Contemporary time is marked by the growing awareness about consumers rights and protection globally. Various groups emphasize their rights vis-a-vis the market and the state. However, there are some sections of society who may not have been able to assert their rights in similar semantics like other more vocal groups. One of such group is that of Indian farmers. Farmers have become marginalised and vulnerable in the new dynamics of market economy. Therefore, it is crucial to talk about the consumer rights of the farmers, as the current pattern of use of resource, production, distribution and consumption is highly tilted in favour of the agri-business giants who control these markets. New scientific discoveries in agriculture gradually transformed the narrative of seed policies making them increasingly in favour of industrial agriculture, which itself is controlled by the international cartel in this field, owned by handful of agri-business giants. These corporations tend to monopolise the benefits of newer technology and have little consequences for social welfare.

Saga of Hybrid Seed

Seed is central in the entire discourse of agriculture. Seed is first link in the food chain, most imp pillar of food production. Efforts to control the seed have shaped the emergence of the agriculture biotechnology industry in the modern times. Therefore, it is important to talk about seed. Current paradigm of industrial agriculture based on hybrid seeds is dispossessing farmers from their control over farming, community and their lives. Seed has a political and gendered domain. We find that across societies, women have been conservator and curator of the seeds. Scholars like Bina Agarwal and Vandana Shiva through their works show how agriculture has been seminal in the lives of women of South Asia. Additionally, women in these regions have been carrier of indigenous knowledge, transferring them from one generation to the other, generally from mothers to the daughters. The increasing marketisation of agriculture is disempowering farmers, especially women farmer as their traditional skills and knowledge in the field of agriculture is made redundant and obsolete by newer technologies. Since there is so much discussion on Hybrid seed, we must specify, what is a hybrid seed. Hybrid is the first generation F1 from cross between two crops that are genetically dissimilar. By regulating the cross we can obtain desirable characteristic in the hybrid for example higher production, bigger size etc. But the problem is that it is only the first generation F1 that will display these qualities, the subsequent generation go F1 will undergo internal suppression and will not be of any use for farmer. So the farmer will have to use F1 which will be available in the market sold by big agro business giants. Unlike earlier times, the farming will no longer be self sustainable. Due to the perpetual dependence on market, especially on some companies for other agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides the farming class becomes further vulnerable. A path breaking work by Carine Pionetti on the Deccan India aptly captures the new dynamics of the village community, farmers and the forces of market and its implication on agriculture and farmers.¹

¹ Pionetti Carine (2005) *Sowing Autonomy: Gender and Seed Politics in Semi-arid India*, IIED.

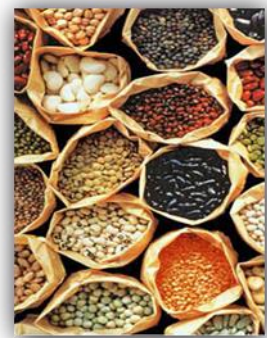


History of Plant Breeding

It is important to look at the history and sociology of agriculture and farming to see if paradigm of hybrid seed is as inevitable as it is claimed by the scientific fraternity. In case of USA, history of plant and seed cultivation can be broadly studies in three phases: I) First period, 16th century to early 19th century when European colonial powers eagerly sought out exotic plants. Plants and seeds were thought to be possessed not by individuals but by nations. II) Second period, 19th and early 20th century in which US State and Federal government heavily subsidised agriculture III) Third Period early 1900-1930s rediscovery of Gregor Mendal's work on plant genetics. Private seed companies such as Pioneer Hybrid took centerstage, public plant breeding programme were withdrawn, vacuum was filled by private seed company. These developments gave a new life to moribund seed companies. As they grew in power, they chose among the scientific developments of public research. Gradually they began their own research. Hybrid seed became the vehicle for controlling the application of other agricultural inputs as well.

Agriculture in the industrial era: Hybrid seed

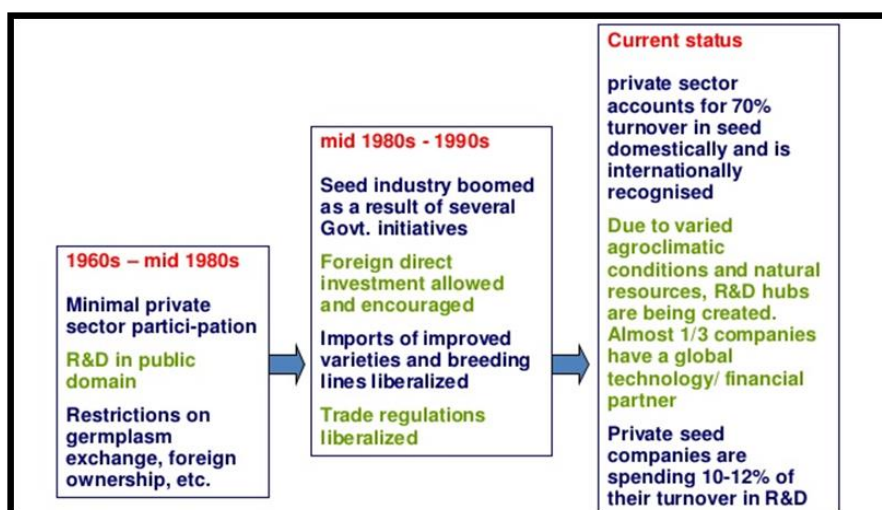
It was through seed that industry entered into agricultural area. The hybridisation solved the problem of capitalist technology's penetration of the agricultural sector.² As profitability is the key in a capitalist system, farmers opted for more productive hybrids. Also, they had little choice as refusal meant being outcompeted elimination from farming business. Corporate globalisation driven by capitalist patriarchy has transformed food, food production and distribution and the control over the entire food chain, from seed to table, is shifting from women's hand to global corporations who are today's global patriarchs.³



It is critical to scrutinise the the political economy of Hybrid seeds and ask the substantial questions: Who gains, who loses and whose interests are being served by this new dynamics of industrial agriculture? What alternatives are excluded as a consequence? What processes of agrarian change are promoted as result? How are we going to engage with the consequence of loss of autonomy of farmers, as now they will be controlled by power structures of the big agribusiness giants. Also there is whole network of seed producers, keepers, distributors around the political economy of seed system. How these forces, guided by the market are putting challenges to the future of food and farming? What is the political economy of seed system? How they are putting challenges to the future of food and farming? How is this emerging alliance opening up opportunities for particular agribusiness with enormous clout and in turn is undermining the indigenous farming and seed systems. Such changes have huge bearing on poor and marginalised farmers whereas the whole profit flows to the foreign capital. A new concept has emerged in this context, the concept of Seed War that has been defined as the field of international conflict Seed war is the term denoting access to, control over and preservation of plant genetic resources.

² Kloppenberg Jack (2005) *First the Seed: The Political Economy of Plant Biotechnology*, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin-Madison.

³ Shiva Vandana (1988) *Staying Alive*, Kali for Women, New Delhi.



The Political Economy of Seed

There is already substantial mechanisation of agriculture in India. The seed industry of India is growing at the rate of 12–13% per year, and is becoming the cardinal part of Indian economy and trade. In 2008–09, it generated revenues of US\$1.3–\$1.5 billion and was ranked the world’s fifth largest seed market, though serving primarily domestic demand and not export markets.⁴ The industry hosts 410 regional or domestic seed firms and 6 multinational firms.⁵ Therefore, it is important to scrutinise the regulations on seeds, especially in times of rapidly changing international milieu to understand its domestic and global dynamics.

With liberalisation becoming the growing reality, the domain of seed which has been primarily driven by public sector till 1960s witnessed overwhelming transformations. The orientation of seed policies have been redefined from 1980s. Newer policies have aimed at stronger plant variety protection rights, welcoming of foreign investment in agriculture biotech, new tax incentives to attract private players. No doubt advances and innovations will potentially enhance the quality of products, but the question remains, if regulatory trends threaten to reduce access to such innovations for those who need it most.⁶ The dilemma arise that how the gains from technological change are distributed across a more complicated landscape involving farmers, firms, and government.⁷ Large portion of farming communities in India is constituted by small-scale, resource less poor farmers with varying levels of capacity to engage with the product markets of industrial agriculture. Primarily they are dependent on the meagre subsistence they eke out from the support

⁴ Rabobank, (2006) *Indian Seed Industry: Market Overview and Outlook. Industry Note 184-2006*. Rabobank, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

⁵ Kumar, S., 2010. Seed Production in India: Triumphs and Challenges in Field Crops. <<http://nsai.co.in/Publication/upload/Dr%20sateesh%20kumar.pdf>> (accessed 15.01.17)

⁶ Sell, Susan K. 2004. “The Quest for Global Governance in Intellectual Property and Public Health: Structural, Discursive, and Institutional Dimensions” *Temple Law Review* 77:2: 363-399

⁷ Spielman David J., Kolady Deepthi E., Cavalieri Anthony, Rao N. Chandrasekhara (2014) ‘The seed and agricultural biotechnology industries in India: An analysis of industry structure, competition, and policy options’, *Food Policy* 45 p. 88. also available on https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Deepthi_Kolady/publication/254416405_The_seed_and_agricultural_biotechnology_industries_in_India_An_analysis_of_industry_structure_competition_and_policy_options/links/00b7d53305f4990e65000000.pdf



system of the state. India's seed market can be divided into (1) an informal market accounting for an estimated 75% of all seed transactions, based primarily on farmers saving, selecting, and exchanging seed, and (2) a formal market accounting for the remaining 25% of all seed transactions.⁸ In this formal sector, the share of state owned seed production is 24%.⁹

Therefore, it becomes even more essential for the administrative policies to stand for public spending on the governmental agricultural projects, that are not driven by brazen inclination for economic profiteering. The public policies have to constantly negotiate with the new opportunities and challenges by the unfolding of forces of globalisation. On the other hand, there are some who question preoccupation of developmental state on such issues. They think that it is futile for the Indian State, under a supposedly neo-liberal dispensation to get involved with either promoting biotechnology or regulating seeds in the villages.¹⁰ The important policies dealing with seeds in India are Seed Policy of 1966, Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers' Rights Act 2001 (PPVFR 2001), Seed Bill 2004. There is attempt to replace the Seed Policy of 1966 with that of Seed Bill 2004 which has been formulated in context of the neoliberal market ethos. However, there are lot of visible lapses that needs to be addressed. Farmers feel that the Bill is in favour of the big companies and the wealthy breeders at the cost of the marginal farmers. many NGOs also have been mobilising on this. Therefore, the need of hour is that the administration and the society must be sensitive towards the rights of farmers. India still remains significantly an agrarian economy, hence a holistic approach translating into a balanced policy for seeds and agrarian sector in general remain the utmost requirement.

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⁸ Ibid, (accessed 05-01-17).

⁹ The source of this 24% share includes National Seed Corporation, 13 state seed companies, and the State Farm Corporation of India.

¹⁰ Herring, Ronal J. (2007) Suicide Seeds? Biotechnology Meets the Developmental State, Centre For Advanced Studies of India, University of Pennsylvania, also available on <file:///Users/pushpa/Documents/Science%20Critique/Suicide%20Seeds%3F%20Biotechnology%20Meets%20the%20Developmental%20State%20%7C%20Center%20for%20the%20Advanced%20Study%20of%20India%20.webarchive> (accessed 10-01-17).



How free are we to C H O O S E ?

Dr Jayashree Pillai

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science

As I think about the various developments in every field, I look back and realize that we as a nation have progressed a lot. By no means have we realized our full potential, but there is no doubting that we have come a long way in the journey we set out, 69 years ago in pursuit of a dream. Today we are ranked among the emerging powers, and are one of the most prominent developing countries.

Over the past 50 years, we have witnessed a metamorphosis in everything, ranging from our lifestyle to our value systems. Some of it has been good and some bad but directly or indirectly, these changes have led to the emergence of the consumer as a force that can no longer be ignored or taken for granted. No more can the consumer be treated as a trivial entity in the market system. Jurisdictions such as CPA-1986 and RTI have further empowered the consumer and have placed him at the focal point of today's market policies.

Not only has the government given more power to the consumer, but the best part is that most people today are aware of their rights. This knowledge helps them to fight against the injustice meted out by corrupt manufacturers and shopkeepers. A number of bodies such as Consumer Courts and National Consumer Helpline have been established so that the interests of the consumer remain safeguarded. Not only this, a number of consumer magazines have come out and provides a forum where people like us can air our grievances, and be assured that some or the other remedial action will be taken. Certainly the consumer has never been empowered to such a degree ever before.

With all prospects looking rosy for today's consumer, we may think that we have nothing to worry about as all our interests are well taken care off. But hold on, is everything really as good as it seems, do we really have a lot of choices or does it only *seem* that we have a lot of choices. The more I pondered on the subject the more I felt convinced that the consumer was being deprived of his rights.

The following narrative happened a few years back. Eager to get the perspective of the youth, one day I sat down with my son and started discussing with him my viewpoints on the existence of real choices for the consumer in today's market. As I carried on, the look on his face suggested that he was becoming more and more convinced that I was finally losing my senses. "What you are saying now, just doesn't make an ounce of sense to me. What do you mean, by us having no choice? According to me today's consumer has a lot of choices." When asked to elucidate, he gave me the example of shoes. "Nike, Reebok, Adidas, Bata, Liberty, Paragon, the list goes on and on and you say that, we as consumers have no choice at all, I really can't get it, in my opinion y we, the consumer are the rulers and it is we who dictate the market and not the other way around ". "Now since you know such a lot about shoes, tell me whose shoes are the most economical?? ", I asked. Pat came his reply, "Bata and Paragon, they make the cheapest shoes" "And the best in quality? " "Nike, Reebok and Adidas are regarded as the best in quality" he said. "Okay, now answer me this,



which is the best shoe for me if I want to no compromises at all either in quality or cost.” “But that’s not reasonable,” he protested “It’s not possible to have both. Everybody knows that quality and cost never go hand in hand. You can’t eat the cake and have it both.” “Aha, but right now I remember you saying that, we consumers, were the rulers of the market. Well if the market responded to our every whim, then right now there would be a shoe out there somewhere that would be as good a Reebok or Adidas but would cost only as much as a Bata or Paragon shoe would.”

Eager to drive my point home, I gave him another example. “Food, take for instance also follows a similar pattern. Yes, sure these days, restaurants and fast food joints exist at every nook and cranny and they also deliver at home, but how many of these restaurants serve authentic regional Indian Food.” “If you want such food, then you must go to places like Delhi Haat, where you’ll get all the regional food you want and more.” he said. “So, “I said smiling, “the only way for me to have regional food is to go to a place as far as Delhi Haat. Doesn’t sound like a lot of choice to me...? “

Finally I gave another instance, “Yesterday, when you asked me to make you a Maggi pasta, I did so with no protest, though knowing that making you some upma instead of that would be more healthy instead. “ “Now you’ve completely lost me, what does upma and maggi have to do with consumer choice...?” “Well nothing directly, but it does reflect that the market has affected us so much that we sometimes give more preference to convenience over our health.” “No I don’t think so, if we choose to do this it is our choice. The market has no role to play in it, so there’s no need to blame it.” And saying so he left in a huff..

As I was taking my evening stroll I finally realized that too much of choice could also be a bad thing. Back in my mother’s days if you wanted something tasty, you would go into the kitchen and make it for yourself. Now these days, you have the *choice* of getting something tastier and more convenient from outside, but we know that it may not be that conducive to our health. In the future it is most likely that we may have so many alternatives that we would choose one that is most convenient than the most healthy, without sparing a single thought about the consequences of what we are doing. Without us knowing it, the market is slowly but surely moulding our thoughts and mindsets to suit their requirements and profit statements.

Consumers may very well be on the top right now, but it is high time that we start getting more choices that are worth choosing. Also we must study these choices closely and learn to differentiate between the good and the bad ones. That is the only way we consumers can become really independent. Then only, will the saying ‘Consumer is the King’ hold true in the purest sense.

Bottled

Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science

There was a river once
Surrounded by swaying green trees
Now sliced, diced, clipped, dried
Lethal mix of the chemistry of lust and greed
It finds its way back to me
The green consumer of this sanitised world
Sitting pretty on my table
The huge expanse of an unbridled river
Now wrapped in plastic
Labelled for my consumption
Clean bottled water.

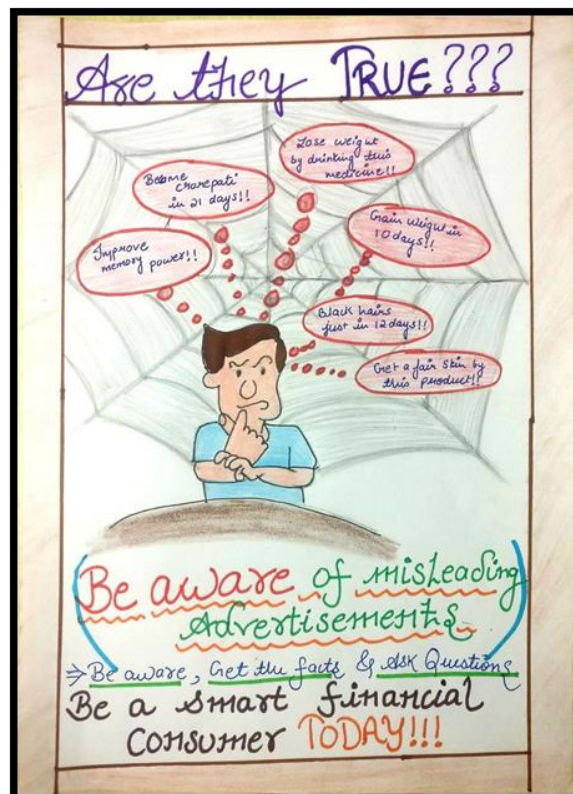


Illustration by:

Sakshi Mandia, B.A. Programme, Second Year



A Transition from 'Customer' to 'Consumer'

Garima

B.A. Programme, Third Year

Simple Living and High Thinking- Our Indian civilisation for long now ran on the above principle. Our living has always been about mere fulfilment of the daily needs and not being greedy about anything what is beyond the requirements. The principle of quality and maximum utility of all the objects has been in existence, from ancient times. The concept of Use and Throw, malpractices of selling bad quality products in cheap rates for maximum benefits, misleading advertisements or even having 'n' number of varieties of shoes, cloths, spectacles and what not has never been part of the Indian culture.

Consumerism today is creating a consumer obligation, to follow new trends to be modern, whereby sadness and regret has been quenched by spending lots of money. For instance wearing expensive branded items is far more significant than wearing good quality locally manufactured clothes. This is nothing but commercialisation of goods and services.

Consumerism has spread so much that people end up buying unintentionally more than they require and ultimately realise that they even don't have little or no space to store those products. Another trend is of taking credit, either in the name of credit card, loans or buying through the down payment and paying EMI's.

All this started in India after the era of Globalisation, when the market opened its doors for private and global players and ended the 'license raj'. It was the policy reform which was introduced for reviving the downtrodden during the economic crisis - Indian Economy. As we shifted from our closed economy to semi-open (popularly referred to as mixed) economy, it was unfolding of another cultural transformation. People shifted from national goods to international goods, they started choosing from Indian to Global Brands, and they now had options to shop from local markets to the Supermarkets and soon emerging Malls. Various scholars term this transition, as an emerging Mall Culture in the Indian Society. I feel that, it is a transition of community of shoppers or buyers from traditional concept of Costumers to Consumers in the modern, cruel and selfish market tactics of the age Consumerism.

Now-a-days, we are not given guarantee-warranty on any of the products, and nothing turns out to be evergreen. Our phones run not more than a year, clothes shrink & fade away very soon and we cannot go back and ask the shop keeper to replace anything, accessories rust away or lose their allure within a short period. Costumers change their cars, mobiles, laptops and all other things at an accelerated rate, consumption levels are increasing and inflation widens the gulf between poor and rich more than ever each subsequent year. More than a contributing factor to social problems like poverty & hunger Consumerism is causing ecological problems as well. The procedure of production & processing of commodities and services requires vast spaces, hence agricultural lands are being taken away from farmers and the excessive use of natural resources for operating the

industries is another concern. While the toxic wastes and waste disposal is also a matter of grave concern for ecologists today and the end result is nothing but pollution in all forms.

Thus, we see that “consumerism” is driven by “materialism”. Customers are transforming into materialistic consumers. As Consumerism exists for only those who have money in their pockets and for people who don’t have any of it; the market then stands isolated yet attracting them towards it and still not offering anything to them. In my last segment I would like to put forth that costumers go to the market to fulfil their life’s necessities rather than the desires which arouse in them due to attractive advertisements. This is the artificial internal drive which the audience gets trapped in, that bombards into their conscience, the uncontrolled desires which are hard to overcome. On the other hand, consumers have an artificial ongoing in order to follow a particular trend with little attention to their needs, the durability and the origin of the product or the environmental consequences of manufacturing and disposing of these modern products.

“Consumerism is a slow societal death”

The above statement is popularly known. Consumption is destructive of the value system in our society. As, when our precious time is exchanged for money to buy things that are more attractive, compelling and desirable and when not purchased we usually have little time to enjoy. Even in television the time gap is filled by the most spectacular advertisements inserted between the most popular telesoaps. We become so used to these advertisements that we often fail at guarding ourselves from getting seduced because we always want more and more and we experience a lack of satisfaction even after having countless things. However, happiness lies in Non-Materialistic ideology. Quality time is turning into a commodity itself. Hence, we need to conserve our quality time, and choose between whether to be a rational being or to follow the crowd. We also need to ponder upon what path we need to walk on in the future- Are we happy in being a Consumer or we want to be a Costumer? It’s high time to give it a serious thought!

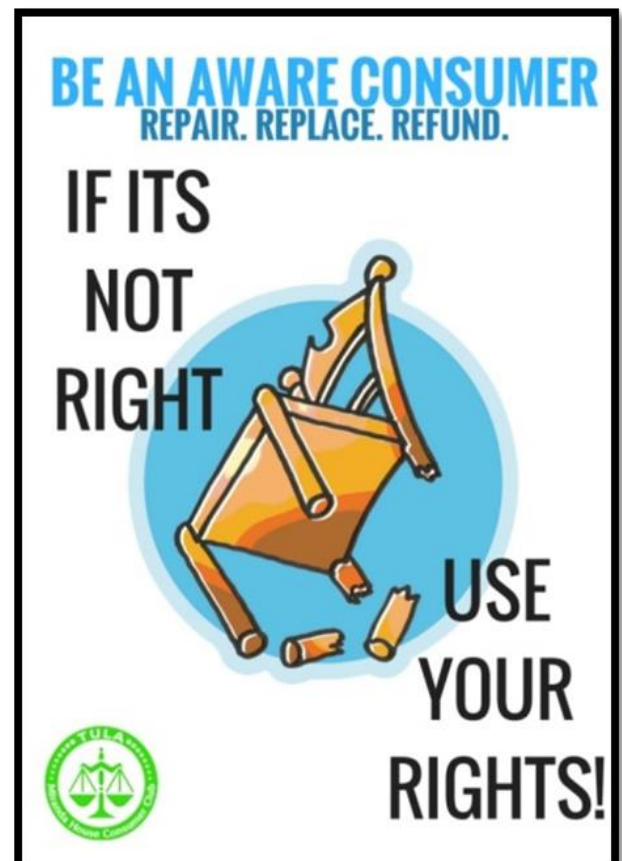


Illustration By:
Sakshee Singh B.A.(H) Geography, Second Year



A Time-Saver: E-Commerce

Aarzoo Malik

B.A. Programme, Third Year

In today's tech-savvy era, where everything starts with a click, E-commerce is making its way through to the top of the chart. E-commerce or electronic commerce, is the trading or facilitation of trading in products or services using computer networks, such as the Internet or online social networks. Electronic commerce draws on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction processing, electronic data interchange (EDI), inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems.

With the evolution of technology, one could argue that e-commerce has the potential to be the fastest growing sector in the economy and the past decade has certainly witnessed its growth. The growth is phenomenal and has proffered a base to many upcoming e-businesses in India. Time is one of the most precious things we have, and it is wisely said that, "use your time sagaciously". Now, with the availability of an online portal to shop from, the act of going to different stores to buy clothes or compare prices offered by stores is considered cumbersome by a lot of people. E-commerce has changed the relative importance of time. You can now spend tireless hours on the internet and buy things from grocery to clothes to gadgets to books, all at a click! Not just saving your time and energy of going out but also lets you help in comparing the prices from all the sites and providing you with the best of the results.

All under one gamut, e-commerce is a boon to the mankind. Catering to a far-reaching audience, it offers a broad variety of goods and commodities. It gets much easier to compare the prices and then go with the option that best suit us. Also the customers can garner more information about the product and its details with the brand equity. Doorstep services and easy returns are attractive features. While, easy payment options along with COD (cash on delivery) provides consumer convenience of shopping. Reducing the barriers i.e. provides global platform, you can get your orders shipped from US or Japan, sitting at your home. Being, the most comfortable and easiest method of shopping, the discount offered during on-season and off-season are beneficial. Thus it fetches more public acceptance. With these expressions in mind, we have seen many e-commerce companies reach the apex, like: Jabong, Flipkart, Myntra, and some companies doing business globally like Amazon and Asus. We saw Flipkart make a profit of Rs 1500 crore this season on its Big Billion Days- this is its biggest turnover by far.

The latest trend in startups, is the of use e-commerce as their business module, as this is the fastest method of reaching a global and national level audience within no time. Time, is so precious for everyone, that it is not just money that matters anymore. People all over the world, look for alternatives that help them save time. E-commerce has been to answer to this population. It has over time, gained popularity- no aspect of internet technology has attracted more attention than e-commerce. It also largely contributes to a country's economic state. It is the sector of innovation and helps in building strong technology infrastructure.

However, for the technologically deprived sections of the society, who could not even avail basic internet facility, making use of e-commerce still seems a distant dream.



Art Of De-Consumerism & How to Master It?

Medha Yadav

B.A. Programme, Third Year

“You cannot beat a river into submission. You have to surrender to its current”.

The above saying directly pertains to how a consumer must swim through the ‘hurricanes and tsunamis of evil market economies’ to reach the shore happy and content. Consumerism is that hurricane and consumers are like little puppets, dancing on its dearly-deadly music. He/She is a being around whom the whole world of living breathes and prospers. They grow inside a shell of the global lifestyle and the global forces mould the consumers’ body and mind, both complementing and supplementing one another. But consumerism, like metal chains and shackles, clings around a consumer’s body.

Commercialising, merchandising and trading- whichever you may choose- consumerism craves an unhealthy system. But there’s a skill to everything – to learn, to play, to indulge in e- crimes, to make profits, to hack, to rob and thus, even to consume. These are not the work of amateurs but more than talented proprietors juggling our lives up and down. The art of de-consumerism requires kicking out such players thereby making the game, a healthy one. Any consumer would be able to perfect this art, if and only if, he/she is able to de-claw the grasp of online marketing, building a straight-up mind not to get swayed by globalizing forces and most important of all, believing in its own inner power of self-righteousness and virtue to defeat them all.

Consumerism is a skill, an art mastered by entrepreneurs, marketers and anyone with the capability of putting an ‘opaque veil’ on top of clear reality. It requires incessant pulling of several techniques and hoardings, one above the other, attaining its highest purpose –a bewildered consumer.

Consumers lack in their rationale when they doubt their instincts, strengths and capabilities. This is the one true reason why they get trapped into the web of ‘scams, lies, delusive claims, false bulletins and promotions, claws of media and market, etc’. They must tighten up their ‘belts and collars’ and jump, bared-footed, into the ‘dark haven’ of glittering modernism. They need to pull on their best version of themselves as ‘CONSUMER NINJAS’ and with their shining swords soaring high, defy the wrong doings around them.

We, as consumers, occupy urban spaces which define the yardstick for development. A consumer, by believing in his/her own true power embedded within themselves, could bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Sometimes, they would need to break the chains of traditions and long-held customs. They shouldn’t be hesitant to step into a ‘pool of risks’ even if people around them motivates them to disembark that road. It is to serve the greater good of a healthy environment. They need to be appreciative of the concept of ‘survival of the fittest’. Now is the



time to de-consumerise the growing appetite of money and materialism and hold our hands together to magnify what we are truly made of. At last, I would like to present a small poem-

‘Consumer Ninja’

Like a sailor, in the oceans, he’s sailing.
Above the oceans, on the waves, he’s walking.
His sword clanging, reaping through, cutting
Through the waves and black currents; he sees
The Sun. He smiles. The bright grin, shimmering.
The shore calls out. His body sinking,
Another soul sets foot, calms, smiles again.
His sword dressed up in ‘*au courant*’ armor.
Death on his cart, carries him and life looks
upon gleaming.



Illustration By:

Sushmita Paul, B.A. (H) Sociology, Second Year



The Online Affair

Shreya Vashishtha

B.A. Programme, Third Year

‘Times have changed’ -How many times have we heard that phrase? But nothing can attest to this fact better than current consumer trends. There has been drastic shift in the shopping tendency of consumers with one major hallmark, the online affair. Nowadays, almost every modernistic individual has taken to online shopping. And why won’t they? Anything, anytime and anywhere – what’s not to like? But this article will not paint the miracles of digital commerce, but rather make you cognizant of some of the facts we must know while experiencing this wizardry.

NET CONNECTION- We pay attention to every detail but overlook this one major aspect- a reliable and efficient net connection. What are you trying to accomplish with a turtle speed connection and an uncertain safety precaution, a path to salvation? I hope by now you have heard of enough cyber scares to understand how delicate the situation is.

SITES- The next big step is to know the most appropriate site to use. Surf online, gather information, ask experienced shoppers and compare your options. If you are using online methods, I am assuming you are educated enough to tackle the issue and can take the responsibility to be more informed instead of being an ignorant and stubborn individual who has more regrets than grey cells. But if you are not familiar with Internet 101, do not hesitate to ask for help. It is for your own health and safety.

BE FRIENDLY- Remember how we used to familiarize ourselves with the shop before buying anything? Yes, that applies to online shopping sites too and it should be a must there as well. These shopping sites may give you a broader spectrum of products and royal treatment, but they are also more complex and demand your absolute focus. Read the policies of the site (yes, even the one in fine print) and especially the exchange and return policy. Spot the features, benefits and flaws. It might seem like a mammoth task but you will thank yourself later. It never hurts to know more unless you think you are far above these minute issues.

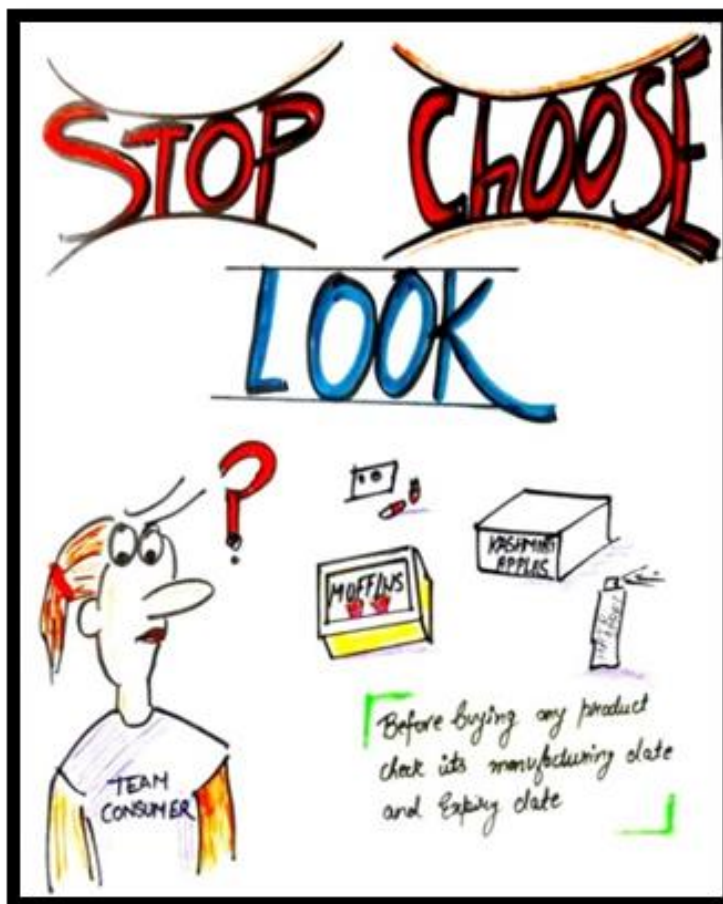
BUY WITH CAUTION- When choosing what to buy, always check for delivery options, product features, safety precautions and product reviews from other customers who have purchased that commodity. You have any queries, use customer support options. If you can demand consumer rights then you can be smart enough to exercise them.

SALE HYPE- Everyone simply loves sale, it gathers more crowds than an India v/s Pakistan cricket match. We have all heard the scary stories of Black Friday sale but we simply never learn. You might learn that sales are not the golden eggs you were hoping for. Frauds love sale season as it is the best time to fool a consumer by using the tricks. Shop if you want but be on the lookout; even the most trusted allies can leave you in the dust.



HICCUP- Have you hit a snag in your shopping adventure? What are you waiting for, solve it. I am sorry but you will receive no invitation asking you to take the stage. Have you been deceived or cheated? Complain against it on the site and hassle them until they solve your predicament. But be prepared to fight your case, and keep a record of all your purchases. Although make sure the issue you are raising is genuine since nobody likes a cry wolf.

Well now that you have basic know how, you are a smart consumer. Now that you know about online shopping spread awareness. Sharing is the key. Consumer affairs don't just end with gaining our rights, they begin with them.



Iqra Razi, B.A. (H) Philosophy, First Year



An Aware Consumer

Hanshi Mishra

B.A. (H) Philosophy, Third Year

An Aware Consumer

Who checks and detects everything,
Before using or consuming anything;

An Aware Consumer

Always goes by his mind and heart,
And always emerges out smart;

An Aware Consumer

If trapped, always finds a way out,
Has a way to carry about;

An Aware Consumer

Can face adversities well,
Without losing hope,
but then can find other opportunities too;

An Aware Consumer

Is simply class apart
Till the end doesn't depart;

An Aware Consumer

Is the one who leads the way
Not the cheaters who cheat away;

An Aware Consumer

Never quits never fails,
Always gives it a try
and her rights always prevail.



Collective and Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu: Self-sustained Consumers*

Dr. Dhruv Pande

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

The concept of collective farming, a relatively contemporary phenomenon in rural agricultural economy (since the last decade) is varied according to the local circumstances and contexts. It is closely related to the notion of grassroots groups.

The collective farming technique used in each village was different from one another. The number of women in a collective varied from 5 to 30 members. This practice is in contrast to the traditional farming practices which includes farming solely by men or by individual families. The impetus to this practice was provided by the TNWC since the early 1990s, more specifically 1992. This practice was carried out by the system of rotational cropping and also seasonal cropping, as the collective decisions taken by the members were eventually for the benefit of all the members of the collective. This included the decision to sow seeds in the fields at a particular time in order to ensure maximum yield.

The need for collective farming arises out of women's concern for supporting their family due to low income of the male-head or little source of income in many rural families, especially the Dalits. This also enhances the collective social spirit by working together in a communion, in cooperation, ensuring each other's well-being and welfare which was otherwise not apparent in isolated living within a family or suppressed living conditions under the male-heads or the domination of in-laws in many families. Hence, holistically the practice of collective farming began to be looked up as a long-term sustainable way of living by many of the marginalised women.

Moreover, the requirement for introducing this alternative method in farming has also come about due to the deteriorating condition of agriculture in India.

The introduction of millet farming has supplemented the process of collective farming. This has introduced a variety of seeds with assured yields. Erratic rainfall leading to a scarcity of water resource has led to a need for cultivating millets as these require minimum or negligible amount of water. Millets are made available through the TNWC and subsequently guidance is also provided by the TNWC staff members with the help of agricultural experts in order to facilitate effective implementation of this kind of farming.

The TNWC holds regular meetings to analyze the success and failures in different settings of millet farming, so as to curb the ill effects, and to fulfill the aims, goals and objectives. Hence questions and concerns are raised about the variety and type of seeds and also the farming techniques used with an optimum combination of timely sowing of seeds, providing the basic minimum required amount of water, timely harvesting and above all timely rotational system of cropping.



These factors mentioned above are significant in determining the successful implementation of millet farming and also the effective functioning of collective farming as rotational cropping itself becomes one of its prominent features. Rotational cropping is important in light of the practical feasibility of not being completely dependent on just one kind of cropping pattern or variety of crops for a higher expectation of higher yields; rather with rotational cropping a trial method is put into practice by ensuring maximum yields in a limited period of time.

Another significant feature worth mentioning is that all of the practices, manners, methods and techniques are carried out depending on the informal education received by the women farmers through the TNWC. This informal education itself suggests a system of training garnered through the everyday farming practices. The knowledge and awareness generated through these training sessions and the technical know-how imparted makes these women capable of managing such farming practices effectively on an everyday basis.

The returns from the joint practice of collective and millet farming are mostly for local consumption. The returns are equally divided among the number of women involved in each activity. A small part of the produce is also sold at the nearby local market.

One of the significant impetus provided to such farming practice comes from the training provided by the TNWC to the women farmers: these include prohibiting of the use of pesticides, and using alternative forms of manures and techniques to ensure fertility of land. The training sessions are quite significant in light of the lack of knowledge of agricultural mechanics and also a lack of spirit of a functional collective in village communities. Apart from collective farming, another kind of farming practice – organic farming – has been introduced in an effective manner considering the availability of natural resources. Organic farming has enhanced the growth of an agricultural economy by introducing new, innovative techniques and practices of farming which are least dependent on the natural rainfall conditions. Besides, it has also supplemented the financial-social sovereignty of the rural women by giving the entire process of this farming in their own hands, thus enhancing an educative communion among them by sharing their individual experiences of organic farming and the returns or benefits that they have achieved in their individual cases.

The women farmers have enhanced their self-knowledge in the area of farming and cultivation and hence fortified their relation with the local land. The self-knowledge gained from working in their own fields has been replicated by working in another's fields as well, thus producing optimum returns, benefitting all in the wider village community. Despite the absence of formal school education, the women, through the strong support of TNWC, have gathered financial and social benefits for the community by motivating other suppressed women folk in neighbouring villages as well.

However, the context of usurpation of agricultural land by the state in nexus with private companies and enterprises has affected the terrain and fertility of the land apart from considerably reducing the availability of land for agricultural purposes. The schemes and programmes of the state-sponsored mechanisms – such as marking of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), setting-up of privately owned educational institutions, industrial establishments and others – are constantly



questioned as these pose serious ecological concerns apart from the loss to financial and social capital otherwise generated by rural initiatives.

The participatory rural appraisal held at regular intervals, bring together the women farmers and the TNWC staff members. This appraisal is in the spirit of a deliberative democracy from the grassroots; gives authority and power in the hands of the women farmers to assess and make a collective decision about the usage of land, in response to external forces such as state-sponsored constructions and schemes of the state-supported private enterprises.

*This article is partly reproduced from *Collective and Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu: Women's Participation, Empowerment and Food Sovereignty*, Dhruv Pande & Munmun Jha, *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 12 No. 8, August 2016, Canadian Center of Science and Education, Toronto

CONSUMER AWARENESS

IT MAY BE TIME TO USE YOUR RIGHTS IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS:

- Is the quality of the goods unacceptable?
- Are the goods unfit for the purpose discussed?
- Do the goods fail to match the description or sample you got before buying?
- Did the service provider fail to use reasonable care and skill?
- Did the service provider fail to do what you asked them to do?
- Was the service delivered in an unreasonable time?

Illustration By:
Sakshee Singh,
B.A.(H) Geography, Second Year



Safety- A Compulsion

Ifrah Shafeeq Qadri

B.A. (H) Political Science, Third Year

Some days back while sitting in the car in the front passenger seat, somehow it skipped my mind to wear a seatbelt. Noticing this my Aunt reminded me to put it on and suddenly a thought came to my mind: Does one wear a seatbelt just for the sake of not being punished, or is it that one really is concerned about his/her safety?

Pondering more over this dilemma, I realized the strange nature of human beings, who on the one hand, have a mind which is capable of turning the world upside down, but on the other hand the nature of such brilliant minds does not include concern about their safety. Why is it that the state needs to intervene and formulate laws and make sure they are abided by, which in the actual sense are meant for the safety of one's own self.

Here I am also reminded of a phrase commonly used in Urdu 'bashr ki akal aati hai magar thokar khane kay baad' (only after meeting with some mishap, does a person regain his mind). This raises a serious question on the role of human beings and how much they are concerned about their safety as well as the safety of others. It makes me wonder had there been no traffic rules, would the majority of the population ever give a thought to wear a seat belt, a helmet, even if it be just to see how they look wearing that!

It is important to understand and realize the role played by state in this aspect. 'State' which is always an easy target of criticism, does intervene to safeguard the lives of its citizens as far as the road safety is concerned. Road safety, which the human beings tend to take for granted, if implemented, can actually prevent the loss of so many precious lives.

Why is it that a driver tends to break the signal if there is no cop nearby? Why do we think of wearing belt? Do we wear in order to avoid getting caught or are we concerned about our safety? Why is it that people are more worried about reaching just in time, rather about reaching safely?

The thought may seem too ordinary to give any importance but it does make a difference, it really does! While generalization can't be made. There are people who do follow all these rules out of the habit, the so called law abiding citizens. However it is ironic that they are called 'law abiding citizens' rather than 'safety concerned citizens'.

So next time you ride a two, three or a four wheeler make sure you take all the precautions, keeping in mind the importance of your life also the importance of others life, rather than just doing it as a compulsion. Think about it because loss of even one life is precious and a loss to entire humanity.

Since we as citizens are the takers of these traffic rules, that makes us consumers as well. Undoubtedly it is a very important aspect of our consumer personality. So next time while you sit back and relax for any drive, make sure you act as an aware and responsible consumer as well!



Food Adulteration

Jahnavi Kaushal

B.A. Programme, First Year

Food, shelter and clothing are desideratum in the lives of people, but when some people start accumulating excess resources to satiate their greed through malpractices, it becomes a deplorable act and most of the time, naive and innocent people are the sufferers. Food is the basic necessity of life and when it becomes virulent or unhealthy to consume, it takes someone's life. In India, it is an ubiquitous occurrence and we hear of countless cases where people driven by selfish motives, sell adulterated food so as to increase their profit margin, even though the profit is miniscule.

Let us take the instance of ration shops, where such incidents are often recapitulated. Ration shops are a kind of safe haven for people belonging to the BPL (Below Poverty Line) section of the society, but some people, in order to satisfy their insatiable greed, adulterate food items available on the ration shops and sell the rest of it in the black market at higher prices, which leads to health problems among people buying and consuming it and sometimes, may even lead to death. Most of the time, the stock of food items sent by the government doesn't reach ration shops and is gulped by the middlemen. What else can be the best example of despicableness and obscenity, where people are so callous that they can go to any extent to fulfill their selfish interests. The problem becomes more perplexing when such food items are consumed by pregnant women and children, which may even lead to miscarriages and food poisoning.

In order to tackle this issue and remove this impediment in the way of becoming a developed country, "The Law Commission of India has recommended life imprisonment for traders, businessmen and shopkeepers found guilty of the death of their customers by intentionally selling them adulterated or "noxious" food and drink, saying that the punishment should be proportional to the crime" (Source: The Hindu). Presently, the perpetrator can get away with either paying a fine of Rs. 1000 or merely being imprisoned for six months, under the Sections 272 and 273 of the colonial-era Indian Penal Code (1860). But now, the time has come when preventive and stringent measures need to be taken in order to safeguard the lives of innocent people. It's not only the duty of the government to ensure this, but as responsible citizens, it's also our obligation to guide and educate illiterate people in this regard in whatever way feasible and convenient to us by instructing them to check the quality of the food item before buying it in a carefree manner and to look at the manufacturing date of the product before buying, as an expired food item may also cause or lead to food poisoning and other health problems. Even students can organize camps or seminars in order to apprise people of on this subject. Thus, as the citizens of this progressive country, let us pledge to bolster this endeavour of the government towards establishing a better society.



Feminism in the Capitalistic World

Saloni Priya

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As popularly said "the largest growing economic force in the world is women" Since long time, women have played the role of "Consumer-in-Chief". This notion is relevant today as well because women in some or the other way, decide and play a part in influencing 80% of purchase decisions for goods and services.

Historically, eradication of inequality has been the foundation and a main motive of feminism and feminist identities. Consumer practices support the dominance of global capitalism, exploitation of labour, theft of resources and concentrating a vast accumulation of wealth among a tiny percentage of global elite.

As observed in the past, it can be said that there was a gender division of labour where women were expected to take care of the children. With the transition from a nomadic lifestyle to settled societies, the familial division of labour shifted into social contraction of gender and thus the ideology of patriarchy emerged. Within the patriarchal context women were forced into a model of economic dependence on men. Even the working women were excluded from political franchise and right to own property. The women who worked beyond domestic and service sectors were an achievement for feminism. However this was also stimulated by industrialization and capitalism.

Since the television was invented the practice of product advertising has become popular. But a change has been observed now-a-days. Historically, advertisements targeted women as caretakers or as an unmarried person looking for a suitable man, but the newer models, recognize the achievements of feminist movements and display women as strong and independent decision makers, money makers as well as sexually driven beings. Thus what we see today in advertising and in society is that women are social actors who express their identities and independence through consumption.

Although, for most women consumers today, consumption is hardly an act of empowerment, it has rather become an act that creates depth and further binds one to the exploitative system of global capitalism and finance. The conflation of women's independence and consumerism raises important questions about the changing nature of feminism and feminist identities.



HOW WILL BUDGET 2017 AFFECT CONSUMERS?

V. Juhi Sai

B.A. Political Science, Third Year

To provide a relief to a major chunk of consumers, Finance Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley has decided not to impose any kind of indirect taxes on them in the budget. A number of positive measures have been taken which include offering incentives to different stakeholders, cleansing the country of black money and boosting domestic spending. This budget is a path breaking departure from the tradition as it is the first instance in which the railway budget has been dovetailed and earlier distinctions between plan and non-plan budget have been removed.

Pushing towards the digital economy post-demonetisation, custom duty and excise rates of equipment used in making digital payments, and parts and components for their manufacture, have been exempted. Government also imposed a cap on cash transaction above Rs 3 lakh, taking forward the agenda to move towards a cashless economy.¹¹ Union government plans to amend Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable rates. Finished leather products, solar powered cells and Liquefied natural gas (LNG) will be cheaper. At the same time, railway tickets booked online from the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website will be cheaper as a service fee will no longer be charged. The service Tax rate has remained unchanged. Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lights will be made cheaper as duty on parts of LED lights have been reduced. Similarly, duty on solar tempered glass for solar powered equipment has been reduced.¹²

On the other hand there has been an increase in the excise duty on cigarettes, pan masala, beedis, and cashew nuts, prices of which would go up. Prices that would go up include filter and non-filter cigarettes cigars, and filter khaini, cheroots, cigarillos, zarda, gutka, prices of mobile phones as duties have been increased on populated printed circuit boards(PCBs) for the manufacture of handsets.¹³ Drinking pure water will also be more expensive as replacement of imported RO membranes in water purifiers will get more expensive due to a 2.5 per cent increase in customs duty on imported RO membranes. The tax rate for small and medium enterprises (bulwark of job-creation) with the annual turnover of up to Rs50 crore has been slashed that would indirectly increase consumers' disposable income. In addition halving the personal income tax rate from 10% to 5% for those in the lowest tax slab of Rs2.5 lakh to Rs5 lakh puts more money in the hands of this segment. All other taxpayers have been given a benefit of Rs 12,500 each.¹⁴

Thus, middle-class consumers will be happy as they will have more money in their hands. It is expected that the tax cut would cost the government Rs15, 500 crore, some of that could boost

¹¹ Mishra, Lalatendu. "Consumers Spared Additional Tax Burden." *The Hindu*, February 02, 2017.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Editorial. "A Fine Balance." *The Hindu*, February 02, 2017.

consumption while the rest could be saved.¹⁵ Thus government's approach seems to allow consumption to revive by itself, without creating inflationary pressures, on the back of improving economic conditions. But, rural consumption has been worst affected in recent years, with demonetisation making it worse. There is no direct benefit from the budget for rural consumers, but higher allocation could trickle down eventually.



Illustrations By:
Bushra, B.A.Programme, Second Year

¹⁵ Ibid.



Towards A 'Cash-Less' Consumer...?

Oorja Tapan

B.A. Programme, Second Year

By withdrawing 86 % of the currency in one fell swoop after the historic November 8th incident (that also demarcated the rise of Donald Trump), I will not discuss on whether PM Modi had unleashed an economic blitzkrieg or not but would like to talk about how the whole note-ban theatrics has caused or will lead to a change in the INDIAN consumer's psychology and mindset.

Short-term impact

The demonetisation resulted in a very severe contraction in money supply in the economy. This contraction, by wiping out cash balances in the economy, eliminated a number of transactions for a while, since there was none or not enough of the medium of exchange available. This effect was harsher on individuals who earn incomes in cash and spend cash and also, to a lesser extent, on individuals who earn incomes in non-cash forms but need to withdraw in cash for consumption purposes, since we are a predominantly cash dependent economy.

Another impact could have been a reduction in the demand for non-essentials by all the agents in the economy in the face of uncertain availability of cash because any sector that is seen to be non-essential, or luxury, will be affected, because whatever currency you have, you will use on necessities. The demand from segments which have access to the digital medium of exchange will remain unaffected, but the rest of the economy would be oppressed. All the daily-use sectors get affected first.

Digitalisation

One reason that the Modi government stipulated demonetisation was that they wished for India to become a cashless economy and encouraged the use of plastic or digitised money that includes varied forms of digital wallets like store credit cards, personal debit cards, PayTM, PayWorld, PayPal, FreeCharge etc. Credit card encourages spending. Some of the reasons for that to happen is that payment modes such as credit cards do not have the cash outflow vividness, thereby attenuating the pain of payment that one experiences while paying. In a comparative study of debit cards and cash, it was suggested that with the use of debit cards, the level of consumption tends to be higher. Further, spending with cards encourages spending on non-essentials.

Digital money seems to be an agent of ease of operation, and more convenient than any other payment mode. While convenient, such mechanisms discourage consumers to deliberate over their spending behaviour, eliciting increases in purchasing probability, in spending large amounts, and most worrying, is that it might also lead to compulsive behaviour. Since compulsive consumption impacts young consumers, the subject has grave implications for consumer education and public policy; this study might elucidate guidelines to protect the consumer's interest under a cashless society where the main issue to be considered is how to prevent compulsive consumption behaviour.



A popular use of mobile wallets is the transfer of funds between friends —It’s much easier for you to borrow money [this way] and much harder to forget to pay someone back. In general, younger consumers would tend to adopt mobile wallets more quickly.

Post the demonetization announcement, COD (Cash on Delivery) was terribly hit while e-commerce giants such as Flipkart, Amazon and Snapdeal et al faced consequences with many shoppers cancelling cash orders immediately. However, this short-term pain would eventually culminate into a long-term gain. The ubiquity to pay for online shopping through digital methods and net banking will drive people towards these channels and benefit e-commerce platforms by cutting handling costs and cash-related risks. Post demonetization, shopping from grocery websites online saw an upsurge as local vendors refused to accept demonetized notes and consumers were yet to get their hands on new ones. It can be safely said that a major chunk of consumers would turn towards online shopping for groceries and everyday essentials. While some will continue to visit retail stores and use plastic money, websites like Snapdeal, Amazon, Grofers and BigBasket would see a great rise in sales in this category. Discounted prices, faster deliveries and better quality of these products will lead to changed consumer behaviour. Cashback and Coupons would take charge. As Indians, we love a good bargain every time we shop. In fact, a large number of people turn to online shopping just for the discounts and deals provided to them through the medium. Demonetization has brought a lot of value consciousness among shoppers. People, therefore, would look towards cashback and coupon sites, such as CashKaro.com, which add to their savings, especially during this cash crunch.

Though the versatile smartphone has become indispensable to the average Indian consumer, there seems to be a hesitancy among consumers to adopt such a seemingly convenient technology. Even in the age of social networking and over-sharing, consumers are worried about the security and privacy of their digitised wallets. Their main concerns are loss of access and theft, like when their phone loses battery power or hits a technical glitch. They also do not want their mobile carriers knowing what they are doing with their funds. Also in India, if you don’t have the payment system and internet connection available in stores, very few people will look into using mobile payments. But, on the other hand, if a lot of people don’t use (digital wallets), retailers would not have an incentive to adopt them. That’s where we are today.

Behavioural Changes

Apart from the technological issues, there is a behavioural change that is being experienced in people from using cash as a medium of exchange to using other cash substitutes both for making and receiving payments. This transition requires individuals to make two primary changes in their behaviour: first, agents need to move from tangible means which can be seen and felt to less or not tangible forms, and second, they have to learn to rely on technologically advanced tools to undertake regular day-to-day operations. The latter requires agents to be educated to the extent of being able to comprehend the content of transactions. This is a difficult part and if not managed properly, agents might be tempted to move to non-official or even illegal cash substitutes. At the consumer level, this outrageous move caused a liquidity crunch.



Conclusion

A lack of financial and digital literacy will make the move to cashless transactions difficult. We learn to look at cash as an agent in the economy and this note equals so and so amount. In India, currencies have different colours to help people comprehend what the value of a note is. Now, we want people to leapfrog to a situation where there is printed word in PayTM on your mobile phone, and you need to comprehend what it means, which means you need to know how to read. The transition will happen. But even if you force it, it will take time to get large numbers of people to move to cashless instruments. Purchasing is an ordinary habit of every-day life and paying for goods or services that are being consumed is a consequence of that habit. Nevertheless, the payment system and its correlation with consumer behaviour is still a field to be explored.

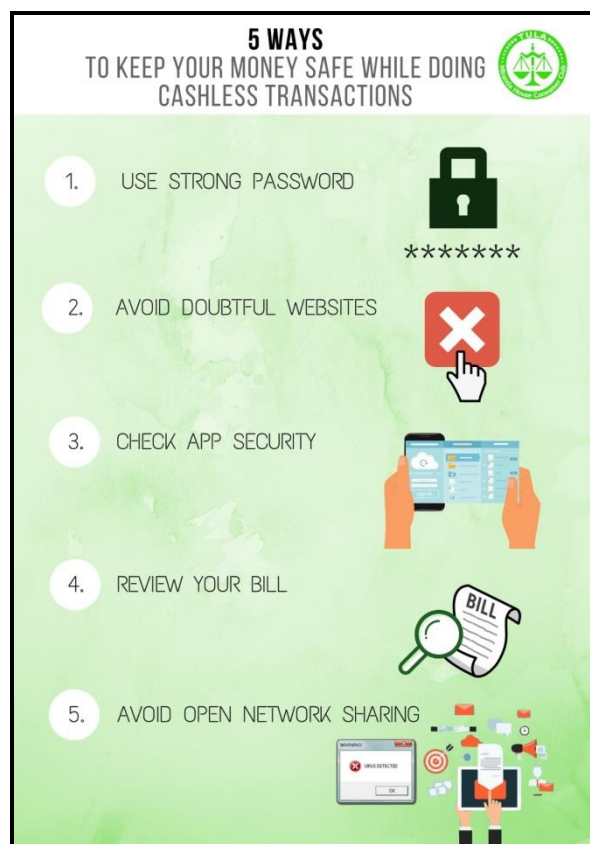


Illustration By:
Sakshee Singh, B.A. (H) Geography, Second Year

vkSj

मुबारक हो

मृणालिनी कुमार

राजनीति विज्ञान, तृतीय वर्ष
मुबारक हो वो ज़हर की थाली
हम सबको जो परोसी जाती
कंकड **vkSj** सोडा, क्या-क्या न मिलता
खाने के नाम पर ज़हर ये बिकता
चाहे हो 'अंडर द टेबल'
या हो 'इग्नोर्ड बराबर'
यही ज़हर तो पीना है
तुम सबको चुप रहना है
चुप रहना है, चुप रहना है
तुमको ये चुप्पी मुबारक
मुबारक **gks** मुबारक
तुमको ये चुप्पी मुबारक
लेकिन हम तो न चुप रहेंगे भैया
बात हमने ये ठानी है
एक नयी दिशा हमें
समाज के भविष्य को दिलानी है।



Illustration By:
Bushra, B.A.Programme, Second Year



Dr. Pratibha Jolly, Principal Miranda House, addressing TULA gathering



Orientation for new academic batch 2016-17





In Conversation with Supreme Court Advocate Sahil Monga



Dr. Sheetal Kapoor, Associate Professor, Department of Commerce Kamla Nehru College, DU



Mock Consumer Court Enacted by Students



Ms. Diksha Rai, Advocate, Office of Attorney General, during a brainstorming session on Young Indian Consumer



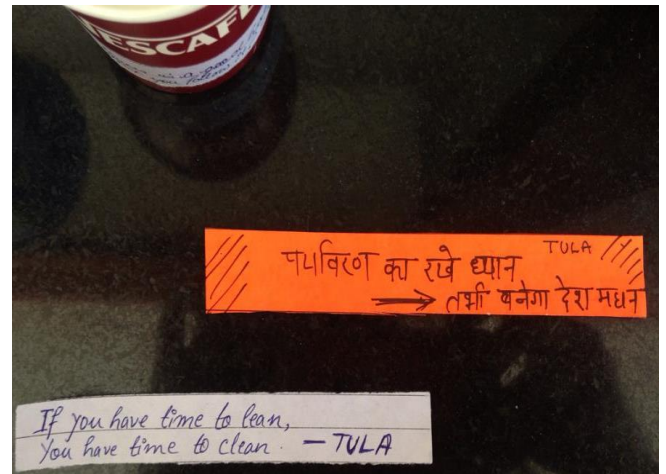
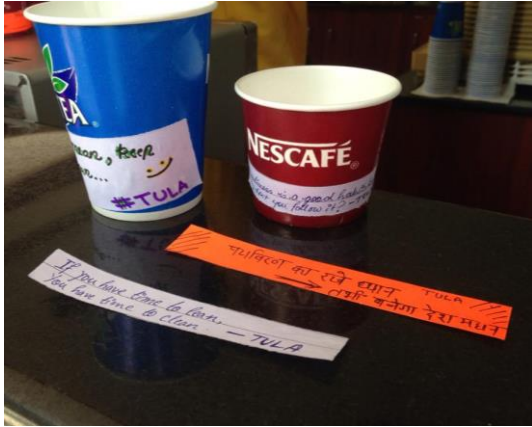
**Consumer Awareness Workshop:
Behind the scenes**



Flash Mob organised during workshop

Glimpses from the Annual workshop 2016, which is conducted by TULA for Consumer Education, Awareness and Protection every year





The Cleanliness Drive



Last passing batch Application Course, Consumer Affairs 2017

**Picture Credits:
Ruchita Choudhary, Niharika Saikia**



Demystifying Hidden Labels

Sarah Muneem

B.A. Programme, Third Year

On the front side of the shiny box of L'Oreal hair dye are printed the words "No Ammonia" proudly and without any hesitation, considering its ingredients, which include, guess what? Ammonia. Attractive advertisements are meant to ensnare consumers into buying a hair dye when you notice a few white hair strands against the sunlight. Newsflash, almost every product claiming to be free of a harmful enzyme, element, or chemical most definitely has it in some percentage, even if that amount is not significant. This can also be called 'legalised lying' or 'hiding in plain sight'.

Juice brands, packaged food items, cleaning and washing implements, all of these products, mainly those manufactured in a factory; contain damaging elements which cause life-threatening diseases like cancer, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, thyroid, etc. 'No preservatives' means there are preservatives, otherwise how is there no fungal growth? '100% fruit juice' means fruit concentrate adds up to only 9%, what is the rest 91% made out of? 'Sugar-free tablets with no calories' apparently consuming these tablets produces more adverse effects on your health than consuming calorie sugar.

The market is littered with examples such as these; we just need to have an alert mind and a make quick appraisal of the facts and not be seduced by what is being said, or shown. The biggest example can be the Maggi controversy. The Delhi government statement said samples of the noodles were found to contain lead in amounts exceeding prescribed limits. "Last week, a total of 13 samples of Maggi noodles were lifted and on test/analysis of the same it was found that in case of masala (tastemaker) part of the Maggi noodles, 10 masala samples were found unsafe having lead exceeding the prescribed limits. The prescribed maximum limit of lead is 2.5 ppm," the Delhi government statement said. Stating that "five samples of masala were also having monosodium glutamate without proper label declaration", the government said it falls "under the category of misbranding". The Union Food and Consumer Affairs minister said that no leniency would be shown against those indulging in manufacture and promotion of sale of life-saving items and harmful food products.

My question is, how has this not been investigated, questioned, even noticed, until 2015? All of us are responsible for this travesty. Are we all asleep or are we just floating in a crowd of ignorance, in our fantasy worlds? It is now evident that packaged food items, especially popular ones, are detrimental to our health in nature, which leaves our safest and some might say, only option, home-cooked food. I mean, who knows what they are feeding us at eateries, restaurants, or even roadside vendors? I just received a shocking video showing golgappas, one of the most popular North Indian snacks, being revealed to contain toilet cleaner liquid, because allegedly, it enhances their 'khatta' taste! I mean, let us not even mention Kurkure containing pesticides and plastic! We are literally eating waste!

We toss around powerful words like 'consumer awareness', not realising it means telling, talking to, and engaging with people who are NOT aware, and not with our friends who probably know more about such subjects than we do, while the rest of the general public remains unaware, and at the end we condemn the masses for being 'fickle-minded and illiterate people'. So tomorrow I'm going to educate my maid in the morning about all that I've learned, because knowledge kept to yourself benefits no one, least of all ourselves.



The Victorious Girl

Garima

B.A. Programme, Third Year

This is a tale of a small girl
Who had a heart as pure as pearl,
She was fooled by salesmen, who called a product herbal.
Impurity reflected in first use,
Because it was chemically produced
And in the laboratories, it was nurtured.

She spent her entire pocket money
The product had no turmeric, no basil and no honey!
Her parents scolded her,
Her friends laughed at her,
She was hopeless and helpless!

Her teacher at the school noticed
And decided to ask her after the class
The girl took time but explained it, in a go
How her two thousand bucks,
Had gone to waste and she blamed it all to her luck!

After a few months, she stood tall in the consumer court,
Against the established businessmen and company officials
The product which was well tested,
The default in it, had now been detected
As it came to surface, they had to compensate!

A school girl from senior secondary
Who was timid and afraid in the beginning
Yet determined to stop not, to get redressed,
Fought with a great effort

As she stood for a her consumer rights
With her parents and teacher by her side,
Indeed, emerged triumphant and fearless!



Education as Business

Sonali Kale

B.A. Programme, First Year

Recently, a renowned coaching institute was directed by the consumer court to refund half its tuition fees to a plaintiff student. The coaching institute was held guilty for collecting fees for two years at one instance which amounts to an 'unfair trade practice' under section 2(r) of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Having paid the fee amount of Rs. 2,33,128, the student did not find the classes up to the mark and decided to quit. But the institute declined to refund the fees citing the declarations made by student at the time of joining.

The above case could prove to be a precedent for many other similar cases which might come in the future or there may already be such cases that have never reached the court or even been registered by the aggrieved party. Today private coaching classes are thriving in the metros as well as in tier-2 cities. According to an ASSOCHAM report, the market size of the private coaching industry was estimated to be at Rs.1.54 lakh crore and was likely to touch Rs. 2.6 lakh crore by the end of 2015. Looking at these figures, it is evident that, the coaching industry has turned into a lucrative business model.

In today's cutthroat educational platform, the coaching classes have become a 'necessary evil'. To crack competitive exams like IIT- JEE, AIPMT, CAT, CLAT, UPSC; students seek admission in the best coaching centres. Some institutions welcome them with a red carpet by making exaggerated claims, whereas students sometimes have to face another entrance exam to ensure their admission in the top batch. It really gets hard for a student to choose a coaching institute that will cater to her/his needs. Advertising heavily and cashing on the success of graduated students or associated students, these institutes try to collect as many aspirants as they can. Extravagant claims are made at the start of the year, such as - personal guidance, highest percentages, best infrastructure, best study material, etc.

After enrolment, many students find the experience unsatisfactory. Sometimes they have to learn from inexperienced faculty. In some cases, the students themselves end up being a part of the faculty to make a living! The infrastructure is also not always as promised. Considering the number of students enrolled, classrooms are often small and congested. The strength of the classes makes it difficult to get personal attention for each student. The extra study material they provide, is either copied from the internet or is of poor quality. Facing all these problems, at the end of the course, the student finds the coaching not worthy of the high fees they have paid.

Though the importance of coaching institutes cannot be denied, it is high time that their incessant growth is checked. While there is debate about whether the fees can be regulated by the government, one solution is to formulate a national level body to maintain healthy practices in the coaching industry. Apart from government bodies, civil society organizations can also take concrete action. Tripartite (Student - Parent - Coach) councils can be formed at the district level to ensure that students receive good services from coaching centres. It is necessary to spread general awareness among students to shield themselves from the evil methods of these coaching centres.



Safety- A Compulsion

Ifrah Shafeeq Qadri

B.A. (H) Political Science, Third Year

Some days back while sitting in the car in the front passenger seat, somehow it skipped my mind to wear a seatbelt. Noticing this my Aunt reminded me to put it on and suddenly a thought came to my mind: Does one wear a seatbelt just for the sake of not being punished, or is it that one really is concerned about his/her safety?

Pondering more over this dilemma, I realized the strange nature of human beings, who on the one hand, have a mind which is capable of turning the world upside down, but on the other hand the nature of such brilliant minds does not include concern about their safety. Why is it that the state needs to intervene and formulate laws and make sure they are abided by, which in the actual sense are meant for the safety of one's own self.

Here I am also reminded of a phrase commonly used in Urdu 'bashr ki akal aati hai magar thokar khane kay baad' (only after meeting with some mishap, does a person regain his mind). This raises a serious question on the role of human beings and how much they are concerned about their safety as well as the safety of others. It makes me wonder had there been no traffic rules, would the majority of the population ever give a thought to wear a seat belt, a helmet, even if it be just to see how they look wearing that!

It is important to understand and realize the role played by state in this aspect. 'State' which is always an easy target of criticism, does intervene to safeguard the lives of its citizens as far as the road safety is concerned. Road safety, which the human beings tend to take for granted, if implemented, can actually prevent the loss of so many precious lives.

Why is it that a driver tends to break the signal if there is no cop nearby? Why do we think of wearing belt? Do we wear in order to avoid getting caught or are we concerned about our safety? Why is it that people are more worried about reaching just in time, rather about reaching safely?

The thought may seem too ordinary to give any importance but it does make a difference, it really does! While generalization can't be made. There are people who do follow all these rules out of the habit, the so called law abiding citizens. However it is ironic that they are called 'law abiding citizens' rather than 'safety concerned citizens'.

So next time you ride a two, three or a four wheeler make sure you take all the precautions, keeping in mind the importance of your life also the importance of others life, rather than just doing it as a compulsion. Think about it because loss of even one life is precious and a loss to entire humanity.

Since we as citizens are the takers of these traffic rules, that makes us consumers as well. Undoubtedly it is a very important aspect of our consumer personality. So next time while you sit back and relax for any drive, make sure you act as an aware and responsible consumer as well.



Consumer Behaviour

Smriti Tejaswee

B.A. (H) Political Science, Third Year

The study of consumer behaviour has always been of great interest. Consumers are often regarded as the "kings of markets". Without consumers there is no link to business organizations and they cannot run without customers. Each and every activity of the business is concerned with the consumer and consumer satisfaction.

According to J.F. Engel, "Consumer behaviour can be defined as the activities and actions of people and organizations that purchase and use economic goods and services, including the influence on those activities and actions". It is a type of behavioural study which explores how individuals make decisions with the available resources- money, time and consumption-related concerns that include - what they buy, why they buy, when they buy, where they buy, how often they buy it, how they evaluate, impact of such evaluation etc. This knowledge helps to understand that the consumer has a mindset which they follow, and which is heavily influenced by the environment that they live in.

Consumer behaviour deals with various stages that a consumer goes through before purchasing any product or service. One of the most common models of consumer decision making processes has been offered by Blackwell. According to him the 5 stages of consumer decision making are as follows: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision made and post purchase evaluation. Consumers are drawn to different and varying psychological, social, cultural, personal and economic factors. Psychological factors play a crucial role in designing consumer preferences with respect to likes and dislikes; they are often the aspect which includes motivation, learning, attitudes and beliefs. Social factors greatly influence the buying behaviour of an individual whose decision is of paramount importance. Cultural factors include the set of values, beliefs, and perception a consumer has which one can see in the individual behavioural patterns that are developed from the culture where he or she is brought up. Personal factors include personal buying preferences and lastly, economic factors, which have produced the most significant impact on the buying decisions of an individual which are directed by factors like personal income, family income, savings, liquid assets of the consumer, etc. These different factors help in deciding how consumers behave in different situations and circumstances.

Consumer behaviour accounts for different participants who take part in consumer decision making. They are – the Initiators, the Influencers, the Deciders, the Purchasers and the Users. They as participants make the most useful decisions. Lifestyle is considered as an important variable in studying consumer behaviour which is often related to status symbols. The desired lifestyle is the outcome of choice and the choice is a reflection of the present lifestyle. The study of consumer behaviour needs to be seen as an integral part of our daily lives whether it is interaction, or integration, with the products and markets. It is an empirical reality that consumer behaviour is unpredictable even by experts.



Delusive Advertisements

Ekta Binjola

B. Sc (Computer Science), First Year

In contemporary times, shopping has reached great heights, be it the variety of things available for sale or the ease of buying them through the online platforms. With a growing population, the number of consumers has also increased manifold. To catch their eye and increase a product's sale, the sellers move to new strategies like mega-sale or spectacular advertisements.

Advertisements are a medium through which the sellers try to convince the consumers to buy their products. Hence the sellers ensure that their advertisements are attractive enough to catch the limelight and get the attention of customers. In fact, most of the products well known to us are because of very good advertising techniques used by sellers and in most cases they are responsible for us buying those services.

But buying services merely because of being convinced by advertisements is not a good practice. This is because most of the things shown in those advertisements are not true- some of them are deliberately misleading. In spite of the faulty information, people tend to purchase those products because their favourite celebrities promote them or the facts are presented in such a way that they seem true unless carefully looked into. For example, if a biscuit advertisement says it is 'sugarfree', people who buy it usually forget to read that it has sugar in other forms. Consumers tend to believe the advertisements which keep them in the dark and fall prey to 'marketing claws' and lose their money and health.

We can see the cosmetic industry flourishing, which employs advertisements as their main pillar of publicity. Consumers buy fairness creams and other beauty products to become beautiful but majority users find no result. It is a shame that in today's date, even the educated classes do not try to inquire the facts and instead fall prey to such misleading advertisements. For example: Maggi had a monopoly in the noodles industry until recently. After a long ban, they have since been trying to recover from the losses they incurred through clever advertising strategies.

As an aware consumer, I support the ban of advertisements related to medicines, which should be consumed only after prescription of a doctor, be it a cough syrup or the already banned Vicks Action 500.

Though advertisements are meant for the profit of the sellers, it does not mean it they are permitted to harm the consumers in the process. There must be strict rules and a proper governing body to ensure that the advertisements do not mislead the consumers.



“I shop therefore I am.”

Samarpita Yashaswani

B.A. (H) Philosophy, First Year

That's the major offshoot of the devil incarnate today-Consumerism. Our identity, our existence is defined by the shopping bags we carry, the shoes we wear and the labels we flaunt today- that's consumerism sticking its tongue out, daring any weaklings to stand up against it. Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so that we can buy idiocies we don't need.

Why are the Kareenas, Alias and so many of their ilk, ruling the masses as well as the classes? Well, that's because they are ironically fuelling a paradox. On one hand, their Manish Malhotra ensembles titillate the wannabe aspirations of the have-nots, convincing them that they need to rise above their station, if only to wear what these bimbettes wear on screen, while on the other hand, their designer couture finds identification in the hybrid sensibilities of all the crème-da-la crème youngsters, providing succor to their ideas of what's hot and what's not.

Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption the motto of our lives; that we convert the buying and using of goods into rituals; that we seek even spiritual, and ego satisfaction in CONSUMPTION- the economy needs things to be consumed, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing accelerating rate. Those shoes I wore just once to my friend's friend's wedding – oh so last season! Diesel and petrol in the car is used up as much as daddy's notes are spent (hard-earned or not is another story altogether!!) at the mall. That shade of lipstick becomes so passé- darn! - Even the food on my plate needs to upgrade! No wonder then that shows like 'MasterChef' have taken the country by storm- spawning an entirely new sphere of cookbooks, shows, food channels, global cuisine restaurants and now even outlets of global cooking gadgets and what have you. Ma's Rajma Chawal has now been knocked off by fondues and macaroons. Pasta is now the new 'Dal'- why, I even ended up having a –'pav bhaji fondue' the other day!

There was an age when- (forgive me if I digress) Ma and Paa and their Ma and Paa were considered remarkable achievers on the social circuit if they were the proud owners of a western color television- but today, even a 50'' plasma, HD, LCD and whatever other names it sports, is treated with a blasé and indifferent expression! Why, you even have a simple remote to control the doors, curtains, AC's, heating system –all of which can be accessed from far offdistancesand evenwhen you're in your car. Of course, my mum complains, (only half-joking at most) like, why there couldn't be a similar remote for controlling the men in the family! - But like I said, that's another story!

There would never be an end to this lament but try this – sit in your room, look around- most of the time you would be indulging yourself in all forms of comfort, but just examine and analyze- “Are these things really better than the things I already have? Or am I just trained to be dissatisfied with what I have now?”

And now you will have to excuse me – I just received my latest online purchase- a pink ottoman which I desperately needed- or did I?



The Identity Paradox and Patents

Mrinalini Kumar

B.A. (H) Political Science, Third Year

Who are we – citizens or consumers? Can these identities overlap or are they two separate characters altogether? Globalization has forced us to choose between these two identities. While the world has chosen the identity of a global consumer, they have had to pay a price for it. The capitalist market perceives them merely as vulnerable prey for seeking profit, not worthy of rights or protection. The WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) signed in the Doha Round of 2001 stands as proof of this belief. It sets out standards for protecting intellectual property, but at what cost? At the cost of unknowing and innocent human lives!

It requires governments to modify their national legislation on patents, copyrights and trademarks which has affected the access of national populations to life-saving drugs and technologies. Patent owners place onerous conditions on the use of new technology or simply refuse to license new technology in order to preserve their monopolistic position, thereby deliberately slowing the dissemination of ideas. Furthermore, Pradeep Mehta and Bipul Chatterjee {Founder Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director, respectively of the Jaipur-based Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS International)} point out that the TRIPS Agreement itself marks the **inclusion** of a trade restrictive agreement in a supposedly trade liberalizing agenda. Capitalism is thus, itself caught in the paradox between open economies but closed minds.

Are all the countries of the world on same pedestal of prosperity? Do all citizens of these countries have the same purchasing power? This relevant concern is what fails to register in the minds of the most brilliant policy makers of the developed nations. Yet, this is still a considerate position towards the developed nations as it is not that they are unaware of the economic realities; instead they are the opportunists benefiting from manipulating people living in those realities. Also, is the definition of a free market restricted to mere import-export? Is right to free access and availability not equally important? This system leaves consumers as mere beggars in front of the 'intellectual property creators' to save the lives of their loved ones. Power, monopoly, capital – is humanity reduced to just these three aspects of life? Have we stooped so low? We, thus, justify Hobbes' narrow conceptualization of human nature as self-regarding and self-serving, with human beings as mere power seekers.

The life of consumers has been reduced to these existential questions only, the answers of which are present and yet unreachable.



Public Health, Ignorance and Lack of Awareness

Madhu Chebrol

B.A. Programme, Third Year

The first step to health care in any nation or region is to create awareness for it and strategize for preventive measures. Very often, simple preventive measures such as hygiene, sanitation, recognizing symptoms etc., prevent many life style disorders. Creating awareness in health related issues has always been a challenge, especially in a country like India where ritual practices dominate the social sphere and any new concept is frowned upon. For example, a farmer may work in his fields and settle down to eat right afterwards without washing his hands. When he is asked to do so, he comments “My *poorvaj* did not wash his hands and he was never ill”. Another challenge is ensuring proper hygiene and sanitation in both rural and urban spheres. The poor literacy rate in India also accounts for the poor level of awareness. Efforts must also be made to properly educate even hospital staff the importance of cleanliness and other health care measures.

A member of the WHO drive to eradicate polio in India comments “during Polio immunization campaign in India, I was frequently confronted by the local village population about the intent and effectiveness of Polio immunization. The resistance was enormous. The villagers recognized Polio immunization as a government conspiracy against them. They thought the intent of Polio drops was to sterilize their children and was a measure to curb population explosion. As a young medical student, often times I had to take a few drops of the vaccine in front of the villagers to ascertain that the drops were not ill-intended.”

This shows the level of distrust the Indian community has for anything new. Any form of change is ridiculed. Simple hand washing was at first difficult to inculcate in our daily lives. However presently huge efforts are being made to teach school children to wash their hands.

People very often do not recognize their illness or ignore if they do recognize it, brushing it away as a minor ailment which will remedy itself in time. These symptoms are rarely brought to attention in time and by the time they are catered to (if they are catered to), the condition worsens and medicine is unable to resolve them. If awareness is created about these symptoms on a large scale, many illnesses may not only be cured but also prevented.

Another aspect of public health care is that people are not aware of hygiene measures and the importance of sanitation. Proper disposal of wastes, keeping surroundings clean etc. go a long way in resolving public health issues. Also, if need arises, people should be aware of where to go to seek help. Even in hospitals, basic sanitation measures should be ensured. If hospital staff is aware of the proper disposal method of toxic substances and infected equipment, a lot of communicable diseases can easily be prevented.

India is home to a huge uneducated populace. If people could read and understand simple methods of prevention as well as, to a certain extent, be aware of when their symptoms need attention, the health condition could improve dramatically. This could be done through newspapers, brochures, public health seminars, television etc. Proper sanitation and hygiene habits must be inculcated in

the Indian mentality. For example, basic things like food poisoning due to flies resting on fences and then settling on food can easily be avoided by covering the food and creating proper facilities for defecation.

Public awareness can hugely impact health as can be evidenced by the efforts undertaken for vaccine awareness, polio eradication, awareness for diabetes and other life style disorders. This proves that proper awareness can improve the situation to a considerable extent. If proper effort is put into creating awareness, many of India's health issues can be resolved.



An Aware Consumer: Rising up from the shackles of consumerism

Illustration By: Nibhi Bansal,
B.A. Programme Third Year



Environment: A Consumer's Abode

Aishna Singh

B.A. (H) Geography, First Year

Consumerism means protecting the rights and interests of the consumer and sustainability means carefully using and preserving resources for future generations. Both components are important in their respective aspects as there would be no healthy marketing without consumerism and no resourceful future for the generations to come without taking sustainable measures. But what puts consumerism and sustainability in the same discussion is the urgent concern for a marketplace that supports the fruitful use of resources into making fine products so that natural resources aren't wasted and an adequate amount of them are kept preserved.

Using the natural resources in a sustainable fashion

Brands and companies should always examine how it's employees are working with resources provided to them for making products. They must also be careful while obtaining these natural resources so that they do not harm any living beings and that the people from whose native environment the resource is taken, are informed, compensated and are not left deprived of those resources. Even a restaurant should appropriately use water and vegetables and should give over the leftovers and extras, and not waste them by simply throwing them off.

Making the global marketplace a sustainability focal point

Consumption is 'the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment'. (Agenda 21, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992)

This is actually a trammel in the path of the placidly changing the global market scenario. However the UN does support the idea of sustainable consumerism. And when the world has got such a humongous and effective organization by it's side, it is indeed very satisfactory that yes, this is somehow possible. U.S.A., India, Japan and Canada, these are a few of the world's biggest consumer markets and are also the biggest in terms of their GDP, and along with the amount of natural resources found in their country. It's just that with a little help from a shrewd mind, the world could literally be turned upside down.

Charity begins at home

We are all consumers. We are heavily dependent on what is available in the grocery stores, the shopping malls and the real estate companies for us for the food we consume, the clothes we wear and the houses we live in. This puts a major responsibility on us, the least of which would be enquiring where these materials are procured from. Is the label or the brand cheating the consumers by advertising incorrect information about its products? Is it a counterfeit product? Is the product actually a rare antique piece? Because it is obvious that shampoo and oil cannot be in the same packaging and there is no such quick remedy-for-all to burn kilograms of fat in a day! Also, are you aware of bond forgery?!

All of these criminal and fraudulent acts along with the general lawlessness of market players calls for every individual to be vigilant and to do certain checks and balances, lawfully fulfill the duties of a good citizen by appealing the court for justice, and asking the people through seminars and events to stand up for their world, and their rights on institutional, country and global levels.

Make sure that you are not being tricked and that the products and items you are using are not having a bad impact on the environment and natural resources are not being callously used or wasted.

उपभोक्तावाद

नेहा कुमारी

राजनीति विज्ञान, तृतीय वर्ष

उपभोक्तावाद की संस्कृति का बोल बाला है,
जिसने विलासिता के द्वारो को खोल डाला है,
जहाँ इंसान की सोच ही नहीं
बल्कि चरित को ही बदल डाला है।
अब उत्पाद जरूरतें न हो कर
केवल दिखावे का नाम है
यहाँ तो केवल उद्योगपतियों को ही आराम है
लालसा के इस खेल में
विज्ञापनों की भरमार है
विषम समाज, विद्वेष अशांति कुंठा
इन सबका परिणाम है।
सुख व उपभोग के संबंधों की
कुछ अलग ही परिभाषा है
उपभोक्तावाद तो केवल ढकोसंलो
दिखावे की ही भाषा है।





Consumer Benefit in Telecom War

Chandni Jain

B.A. (H) Political Science, Third Year

Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio Infocom has had an indelible impact on the Telecom Industry. On the one hand, its cheap pricing and promotional freebies have resulted in a price war with other telecom giants such as Airtel. On the other, consumers are enjoying the low prices and significantly increasing their data consumption.

Loss Leader Strategy

India has always been a country of poor Internet connectivity and data scarcity. Data is costly for a vast majority of rural India, and even amongst the urban elite who can afford to purchase 4G data packs, connectivity issues are rampant. Reliance Jio has successfully made use of this situation to its own benefit. Thanks to Jio, millions of Indians have now gone online and increased their data usage. Although Jio is currently facing huge losses, its loss-leader strategy will help reap rewards in the future. In the short run (might be 3-4 years) Jio will successfully create a huge consumer base of data users and then later slowly increase prices and retain most of its previous consumers.

Impact on Industry

Jio has also come under fire for violating TRAI regulations in providing extensive free services. The competition that Jio is fuelling has made business very difficult for other telecom giants. In order to compete with Jio even if they try to expand their operations, there is only limited spectrum available for grabs. Overall, Jio has left a huge dent on the revenues of the telecom industry in its pursuit of establishing itself and capturing the market. Recently, rivals such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone have had to slash their prices by more than 50%, reporting the lowest profits in the last 4 years. "The quarter has seen turbulence due to the continued predatory pricing by a new operator," said Gopal Vittal, Bharti's managing director and chief executive for India and South Asia. But the impact of the Reliance-triggered price war—profits for Idea Cellular, the country's third-largest mobile phone operator, fell 88% for the quarter ended September from the same period a year ago—is likely to reverberate through 2017 and well into 2018. A Vodafone-Idea merger is also expected to take place sometime in the near future in order to counter the competition of Jio.

Impact on Consumers

In October 2015, India hit the billion mark for its mobile phone subscriber base, according to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data. As data prices plummet, there will also be an increase in the smart phone market with more and more people looking to enter into the world of 4G connectivity. In the 1990s, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had attempted India's first Telecom revolution, bringing mobile phones into almost every household. Similarly, Reliance has attempted to revolutionise seat-phone usage, internet connectivity and made it easier for more than a billion Indians to embrace the idea of a Digital India.



Lead in Paint, Possibilities of Chemical Hazards and Consumer Safety

Preeti Kumari

B.A. (H) Political Science, Third Year

Lead content in paint has major health risks involved. It is a ‘cumulative toxicant’ dangerous for the environment and human health, particularly children. Lead exposure features in the list of top 10 environmental health threats globally as per the World Health Organization. It affects different body systems, especially the brain and central nervous systems. It is particularly dangerous for young children leading to low IQ, attention deficit, anemia and learning deficits. When a pregnant woman is affected, it can lead to still birth, pre mature birth, miscarriage, low birth weight and deformities. While the exposure to lead can have many causes, paints used in households and for decorative purposes is one of the most common one. Science has been unable to determine with exactness any safe level of exposure to lead.

With legal regulations and advocacy lead exposure has been mitigated in many countries. However paint used for household and decorative purposes persist with dangerous levels of lead, especially in developing countries. The issue also remains pertinent for India with presence of lead in commonly used paints remaining high. Public advocacy in India did lead to major companies eliminating lead presence in paint following limits prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). However small and medium sized enterprises did not follow the set limits since it was not mandatory.

The ‘Regulation of Lead Contents in Household and Decorative Paints Rules, 2016’ notified in November 2016 seeks to address this policy lacunae, conforming to global standards strictly prohibiting manufacture, trade, import and export of household and decorative paint with the presence of metallic lead beyond 90ppm(parts per million). The regulation also mandates testing procedures and labelling to ensure effective implementation. This is a welcome move, in synchronization with global movements like the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (The Lead Paint Alliance) convened by the UNEP and WHO. The Alliance seeks to eliminate the manufacture and use of lead containing paints by 2020, thus also eliminating the serious health risks involved. The objective is a step to further realize Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development goals, which is to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” Particularly SDG 3.9 which says “by 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals.”

Thus the policy framework in India has moved in a positive direction, the responsible authorities, in this case the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) however need to ensure the implementation through efficient monitoring and stringent penalties. The responsibility also significantly lies with the consumer to be vigilant. The labelling of lead presence (which should not be beyond 90 ppm) should be checked by the consumers on the product and in case of any violations the same can be reported in writing or online on the Bureau of Indian Standard’s website. The systems are in place, the need is to make good use of the systems and not jeopardize our health due to ignorance.



The Supreme Court of India and Consumer Grievances

Aastha Vidyasagar

B.A. Programme, Third Year

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a set of guidelines in the year 1985 known as the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, which enlists objectives and guidelines which are to be followed by nations for protecting their population of consumers.

India, in 1986, formulated The Consumer Protection Act which exclusively lists six and now eight consumer rights. It provides for a three tier quasi-judicial redress mechanism at the National, State and District levels. It is under these bodies that an aggrieved consumer can file a complaint against the wrong done to him/her on purchase of a good or service. There have been certain instances when some of such consumer cases were moved to the Supreme Court of India.

Morgan Stanley Mutual Funds v/s Kartick Das, May 1994, is a landmark decision of the Supreme Court dealing with complaints of investors in share market. The issue before the Supreme Court was if 'before allotment of shares, the applicant thereof could be called a consumer as defined in the Act.' Two judges, residing the bench, S.Mohan and Dr. A.S. Anand J.J. gave the judgment that a 'share' is a part of the share capital which is raised to carry on the trade. Creation of share capital without allotment of shares does not bring shares into existence. Therefore, the respondent, Kartick Das or the association is not a consumer under the Act. The result of this judgment was that matters pertaining to IPOs (Initial Public Offering) or allotment of shares on application are now outside the exhibition of the Consumer Court.

A case of electric services was reported in **January, 1997 M/S Swastic Industries v/s Maharashtra State Electricity Board**, where the issue before the Supreme Court was 'whether the Electricity Board has the right to disconnect supply if the consumer does not pay the bill for additional sum without filing the suit to recover dues even after expiry of the prescribed limitation period of 3 years.' With K Ramaswami and G.T. Nanavati as judges, it was decided by the Supreme Court that since the consumer had admittedly failed to pay the charges, the Respondent Electricity Board was right in disconnecting the supply without filing the suit to recover dues even after expiry of the prescribed limitation period of 3 years.

A case of medical negligence in **March, 1998** was one of the first to reach the Supreme Court. **M/S Spring Meadows Hospital and another v/s Harjol Ahluwalia through K.S. Ahluwalia**. A child named Harjol was admitted in the Hospital which made the diagnosis that Harjol was suffering from typhoid and medicines were prescribed for it. The nurse, administered the wrong injection to the child causing him to collapse in his mother's lap and suffered a cardiac arrest. The doctors of Spring Meadows told the parents that they did not have the required facilities and advised them to go to a different hospital. On reaching AIIMS, the doctors intimated the parents that irreparable damage had been done to parts of the child's brain with no chances of recovery and that he will continue to live in a vegetative state. A complaint was filed by the parents.

Issue before the Supreme Court was ‘whether the doctors were negligent while treating the child patient.’ The hospital argued that there was negligence on part of the doctors and if any, was on part of the nurse who misread the prescription. The Supreme Court with Justice G.B. Patnaik as the Judge passed the judgment that since hospital appoints the doctors and nurses and that a consultant could be negligent to delegate responsibility to his junior, with the knowledge that the latter is incapable of carrying out the duties. The hospital could now escape liability in this matter.

Cases like the ones mentioned above, tell us- the consumers that the redress mechanisms which have been set up, sought to give speedy and inexpensive solution to an aggrieved consumer. It is important for us to understand the value of the rights and use them as responsible consumers of the population. Any consumer can be wronged for the smallest and biggest interest of the supplier. But, the responsibility of keeping ourselves wary of such mal practices is on us.



Strip Story by:

Akanksha Maroria, B.A.(H) Philosophy, First Year



जागो ग्राहक जागो

पूजा शाह

राजनीति विज्ञान, तृतीय वर्ष

मुद्दा पुराना ही सही लेकिन बात नयी है,
जागो ग्राहकजागो की लहर अब हर जगह चली है।
जिसका है नेक इरादा
हर ग्राहक की सुरक्षा का वादा,
उपभोक्ता कानून जानिए
अपने अधिकार को पहचानिये।
जब गारंटी वारंटी से दुकानदार जाये मुकर,
तो तुरंत उपभोक्ता अदालत की ओर करे डगर।
रहिये अपने मुद्दों व समस्या से खबरदार,
उपभोक्ता अदालत दिलाएगा आपको आपका अधिकार।
जिसे सरकार की मुहिम कहिये या कहिये नयी सोच का परिणाम,
जो बेईमानी के ज़माने में दे रहा है
अपने कार्यों को अंजाम।
इसलोये अपना हक जाने और अपना उपभोक्ता मांगे।



Illustration By:
Sakshi Singh, B.A.(H) Philosophy, First Year

उपभोक्ता की चिंता

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जब भी मीडिया में मिलावटी खाद्य पदार्थों की खबर पढ़ती हूँ या सुनती हूँ तो दिल-ओ-दिमाग में यही सवाल उठता है कि क्या इंसानियत खत्म हो गयी है? पैसा कमाने की हवस इस कदर बढ़ गयी है कि इंसान की जान और सेहत भी उसके आगे छोटे पड़ जाते हैं ! सवाल ये भी उठता है कि क्या खाएं कौन सी कंपनी का खरोदें ज्यादा पैसा खर्च करके भी क्या सही चीज़ मिल पायेगी या क्या क्या खाना बंद कर दे ! दूध में यूरिया शैम्पू में मिलावट मसलो में रंगों और खाद्य पदार्थों में मिलावट खोये, पनीर में पेपर की मिलावट कौन सी चीज़ मिलावट से मुक्त है । शुद्धता का दावा लड़ती कंपनियाँ असली होने का ढिंढोरा पीटते विज्ञापन तब झूठे और थोथे हो जाते हैं जब एफ. एस. एस. ए. आई. जैसी एजेंसियाँ बड़ी बड़ी कंपनियों के सामान में मिलावट की बात कहती हैं । कभी कभी सोचती हूँ पहले के समय में बड़ी कम्पनियों के सामान का इस्तेमाल रुतबे और अमीरी की निशानी थे लेकिन आज हमारे जैसे मध्यमवर्ग इन ब्रांडेड कंपनियों का सामान ये सोच कर खरीदता है कि ये पदार्थ स्तरीय होंगे गुणवत्ता के मानदंडों पर खरे होंगे । ज्यादा पैसा खर्च करके भी खरा माल न मिले इससे बड़ी विडम्बना और क्या होगी ।

महानगरों में रहने की ये कीमत चुकाने के लिये अभिशप्त है । एक ओर अच्छे स्वास्थ्य के लिए खाना आवश्यक है लेकिन जब खाने की थाली ही ज़हर बन जाये तो क्या करें बच्चे को शहद चटायें स्वास्थ्य के लिए रोगों से लड़ने के लिए और शहद में मिले एंटीबायोटिक उसके स्वास्थ्य को ही नुकसान पहुंचा दे । एक और हवा पानी मिट्टी जैसे ही सब रासायनिक पदार्थों के कारण दूषित हो चुके हैं उस पर मिलावट का गोरखधंधा कोढ़ में खाज की तरह है । बाजार की भी लीला निराली है। मुनाफे का बाजार , हर स्थिति में अपने लिए रास्ता निकल ही लेता है । आजकल 'आर्गेनिक फूड' का खूब हंगामा है या कहे आर्गेनिक के नाम पे खूब लूट है । उपभोक्ता को धोखा देकर ये कंपनियां अपना उल्लू सीधा करती हैं । पर ये भी सच्चाई है कि धोखा खाने के अलावा हमारे पास कोई चारा नहीं क्योंकि 'अन्याय जिधर शक्ति उधर व्यवस्था पुलिस प्रशासन इन मुनाफाखोरों के साथ हैं । भ्रष्टाचार का तंत्र हमें जकड़े हुए है । उपभोक्ता अदालतें हैं फिर भी उपभोक्ता ठगा जा रहा है । कानून है फिर भी दोषी गिरफ्त से बाहर है । बल्कि दवाओं और अस्पतालों का व्यापार खूब फल फूल रहा है। बीमारियाँ नित नए रूप में हमें अपने गिरफ्त में ले रही हैं । लेकिन इन सबके बावजूद भी जीवन चल रहा है -ये भी सच्चाई है । इस अंधकार में रौशनी के कुछ टिमटिमाते दिए जीवन को रौशन किये हुए हैं ।



WHAT IS THE NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION ?

- PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION
- CONSUMER EDUCATION
- REDRESSAL OF COMPLAINTS
- BULLETINS AND PERIODICALS
- ENCOURAGING HONEST BUSINESSMEN
- CONNECTING LINK
- UNITY
- QUALITY LIFE FOR CONSUMER
- ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS
- GETTING PUBLIC SUPPORT

Illustration By:
Sakshee Singh
B.A.(H) Geography, First Year



DUTIES OF A CONSUMER

IN ORDER TO SECURE RIGHTS, THE CONSUMERS HAVE TO FULFILL THE FOLLOWING DUTIES:

- WHILE PURCHASING GOODS, CONSUMERS SHOULD LOOK AT THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCTS AS WELL AS ON THE WARRANTY OF THE PRODUCT.
- THEY SHOULD ASK FOR CASH MEMO FOR THE ITEM PURCHASED.
- THEY SHOULD FORM CONSUMER AWARENESS ORGANIZATIONS.
- THEY MUST COMPLAIN FOR THEIR GENUINE GRIEVANCES.
- THE MUST KNOW THEIR RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

Survey Report on Consumer Awareness

Yukti Gupta, B.A. Programme, First Year

Riddhi Mediratta , B.A. (H) Philosophy, First Year

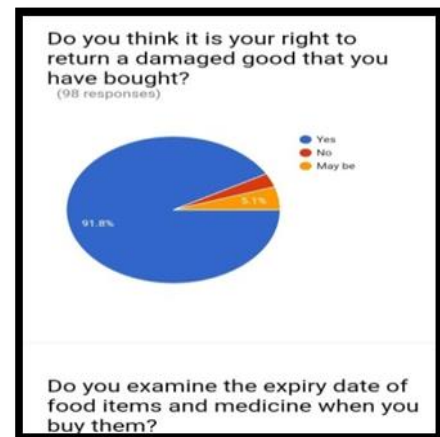
In today's age of capitalism and globalization, the main objective of every seller is to maximize profits. Consumer exploitation is very rampant and the need of the hour is that consumers keep abreast not only of the commercial aspect of sale but also the health and security aspect. Consumer awareness is the knowledge that a consumer should have about his/her legal rights and duties due to virtue of being a consumer. In India, the earliest writing on need for consumer awareness was written by **Kautilya** in 'ARTHASHASTRA'.

The objective behind conducting this survey was to, first, study the level of consumer awareness in the domain of many institutions including ours, and secondly, setting consumers to stand up against exploitation. Also, to make consumers aware of their rights and duties viz checking the MRP of the commodities, approaching consumer forums, COPRA and also against adulterated and sub-standard articles.

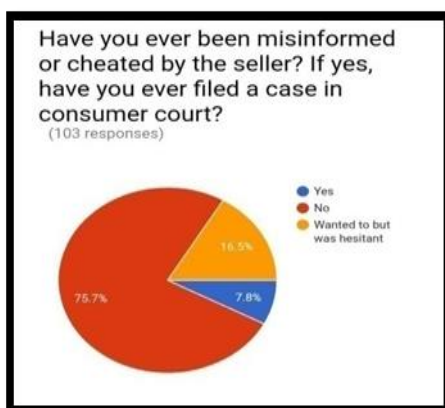
Survey Method

A questionnaire in the form of a google doc, was compiled by TULA and circulated among students and people of different age groups. It focused mainly on consumer rights awareness, knowledge and attitude about consumer rights and experiences with consumer rights' violations. The survey was mainly conducted online and for improved accessibility, the link was communicated in Whatsapp groups.

The survey was conducted by members of TULA with the objective of studying the level of consumer awareness among the consumers across India.



Observations



An analysis of the survey data shows that most of the respondents are conscious about the COPRA, consumer rights and organizations that provide certification of standardization for goods and services in India. Besides, it was brought to light that many of the consumers hesitate to approach to courts to get their grievances redressed due to the lengthy and tiring processes. The fact that **22% of the total respondents** believe, that advertisements are the most reliable source of information about a good, is shocking. Almost 90% of them think that it is their right to return a damaged good but the actual truth is, only a few of dare to take an initiative to file a



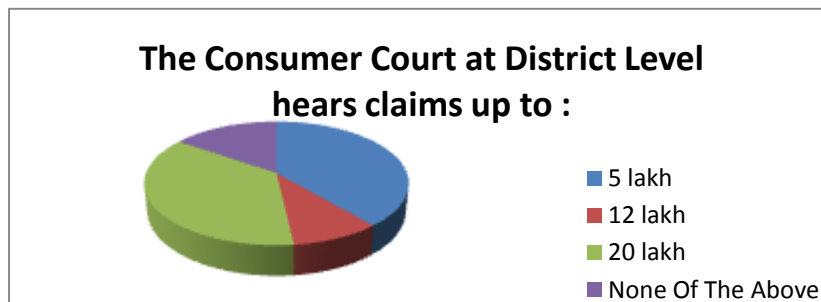
case in the consumer court, most of the times they are hesitant.

Also, there is less awareness among people about the 'claim limits' of various Consumer Courts since around 39% of respondents thought that at District level, a Consumer Forum can hear claims upto 5 lakhs but actually the claim could be as high as 20 lakhs.

The educational implication of the survey was to confirm that every consumer should be aware of different aspects of the commodities that they consume and also should have the basic knowledge about consumer rights and duties.

Also, in the background there is a dire need to create consumer awareness among the common man about the fast track consumer courts so that they are not prone to cases of cheating, adultery and misleading advertisements.

With the coming of Consumer Protection Act (COPRA), a robust system of consumer redressal system is in place for which maximum outreach has to be made to the common man to use.



Conclusion

Who gets the risks? The risks are given to the consumers, the unsuspecting consumer and poor workforce. And who gets the benefits? The benefits are only for the corporations, for the money makers.

Through consumer rights awareness, people will be more aware of their rights and, thus, turn out to be more ideal consumers as a result of being more alert, responsible and smart. When consumer awareness rises and consumers begin to exercise their rights and duties, efficiency of the sellers and producers will be compelled to improve and thereby the Indian economy will also develop.

So exercise your purchasing power as a consumer, volunteer and bring joy to those in need, share your experiences, tell your stories and inspire others along the way! **GET UP, STAND UP, STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS, DON'T GIVE UP THIS FIGHT!**



ANNUAL REPORT OF TULA FOR ACADEMIC SESSION 2016-17

For the session 2016-17, Tula, Miranda House Consumer Club has been actively trying to spread the word of Consumer Awareness. This session for Tula began with Orientation as the first major event. On 3rd August 2016 for newly enrolled young girls, Tula organised a session conducted by our Tula Union. Dr. Jayashree Pillai, Convenor of Tula, addressed the students by telling them the importance of consumer rights and how Tula has completed a decade of its existence. Under her leadership the Union members spoke and gave a presentation on the need of consumer awareness, how we are trying to achieve it and how we plan to move forward. Fresh women were very keen to join the club, with an urge to promote consumer awareness in society. Towards the end of Orientation, the interested students registered to join the society.

Thereafter, Fresher's Talent Search was conducted in the month of August. For the contest of Tula's Miss Fresher, the competition was competitive as numerous students registered. The selection was done in two rounds. In the very first round students had to show their talent in form of essays, poems, sketches or posters on "Importance of Consumer Awareness in the Contemporary World". The shortlisted candidates were invited for a Quiz where they were quizzed upon the Consumer Rights, Consumer Act, Tula- the society itself and about the other Consumer Issues. Out of the five final candidates, Nidhi was selected as Ms. Fresher of Tula, Miranda House Consumer Club.

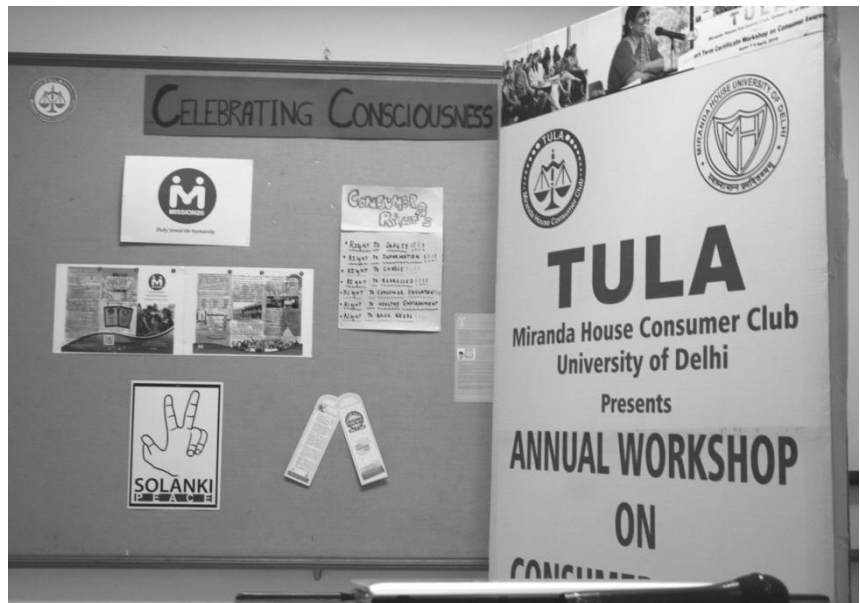
Late in August we organised few meetings of the Club Members to discuss various issues and how our society can contribute towards it. Some students raised the concern of "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" and its crucial significance in day-to-day life. We realised how not only Cleanliness Drives are important but that awareness was all the more important because of them. One of the members pointed out how we, as an educated and aware youth don't even bother about throwing away our own trash. So from our own college we contacted the Nescafe shop staff and we asked them to let us paste slogans related to Cleanliness over the coffee cups. This is how it began and for two days members of the Club brought slogans and pasted over those cups. We also felt that there was an initial connection between consumers and cleanliness which we believe cannot be overlooked.

After the Delhi University Students Election, we also felt the need for a clean campus around us. So, TULA members along with NSS of Miranda House and No Poster Party organised a cleanliness drive at our Campus on 9th September 2016. Numerous students from various societies and even colleges started a march from Miranda House Hostel Gate to in and around campus, ending it at Law Faculty.

From 20th to 22nd September 2016 Tula conducted a Three Days Workshop on "Awareness on Consumer Issues". Like every other year, this workshop has become a tradition of Tula. On the very first day, Mr. Sandeep Jindal, Advocate in Supreme Court of India came for the first session. He gave a lecture on Consumer Protection Act-1986 and upcoming Amendment Bill. His session was very enlightening in the sense that he not only told us about the provisions of the acts but also how these provisions are and will be in the favour of the consumers. His session was followed by an Open House Discussion initiated by Dr. Jayashree Pillai, convenor of Tula. Students shared their perspectives and experiences and the day ended with a great discussion. On the second day of the workshop Mr. Sahil Monga, an advocate in Supreme Court came for the first session. He gave a very insightful presentation on Goods and Service Tax Bill and its implications on Indian Consumer. His presentation was very



much appreciated as he gave us a very holistic view of GST. In the second session Dr. Sheetal Kapoor, Associate Professor from Kamla Nehru College addressed the students. She gave a presentation on Comparative Testing of the Products. Her session was followed by Mock Consumer Court Act prepared by the Club members. The students in the play demonstrated how a consumer gets redressal and how a consumer court proceeding works. On the last day, Ms. Diksha Rai, an alumni of Miranda House, an Advocate of Supreme Court, Office of Attorney General & Standing Counsel for State of Assam, spoke on the Young Indian Consumer. Her session was very interactive as she engaged with the participants and from their examples she took up the conversation. In the last session of the workshop, all the students gave individual and group presentations on 'What did we learn?'. Students had the liberty to present in whatever way they desired. Students presented their reports in the form of poetry, small one act plays, speeches and posters. Their creative thoughts and way of presentation was judged, on the basis of which the best presenters were awarded. Followed by this, the Valedictory Session was organised, in which the best presenters were handed out prizes and certificates were distributed.



In mid- November before the preparatory leave, the Club organised an informal discussion on the topic "Demonetisation and Consumers". Students participated fervently in the discussion and debated among themselves on how impactful this step had been. Various students supported the decision while the majority was against it.

The Club Members met early in January, soon after the semester began. A rich discussion upon the future plan of action was conducted. Students also pitched in innovative ideas for publishing our annual magazine, Santulan.

Presently we are working towards celebrating World Consumer Rights Day in the coming month of March.



The need is to move from
thing oriented
society to
Person
Oriented Society

The need is to move from
MEDICAL DOMINANCE TO
MEDICAL CONSUMERISM



THE PEOPLE
SHALL CHOOSE
(THE DEMAND)

FREE

BUY NOW
50% OFF

Satisfaction
is
CONSUMER'S
MONOPOLY

CITIZEN
MUSCLE

CONSUMER
MUSCLE

Right of Consumer

CONSUMER
PROTECTION