

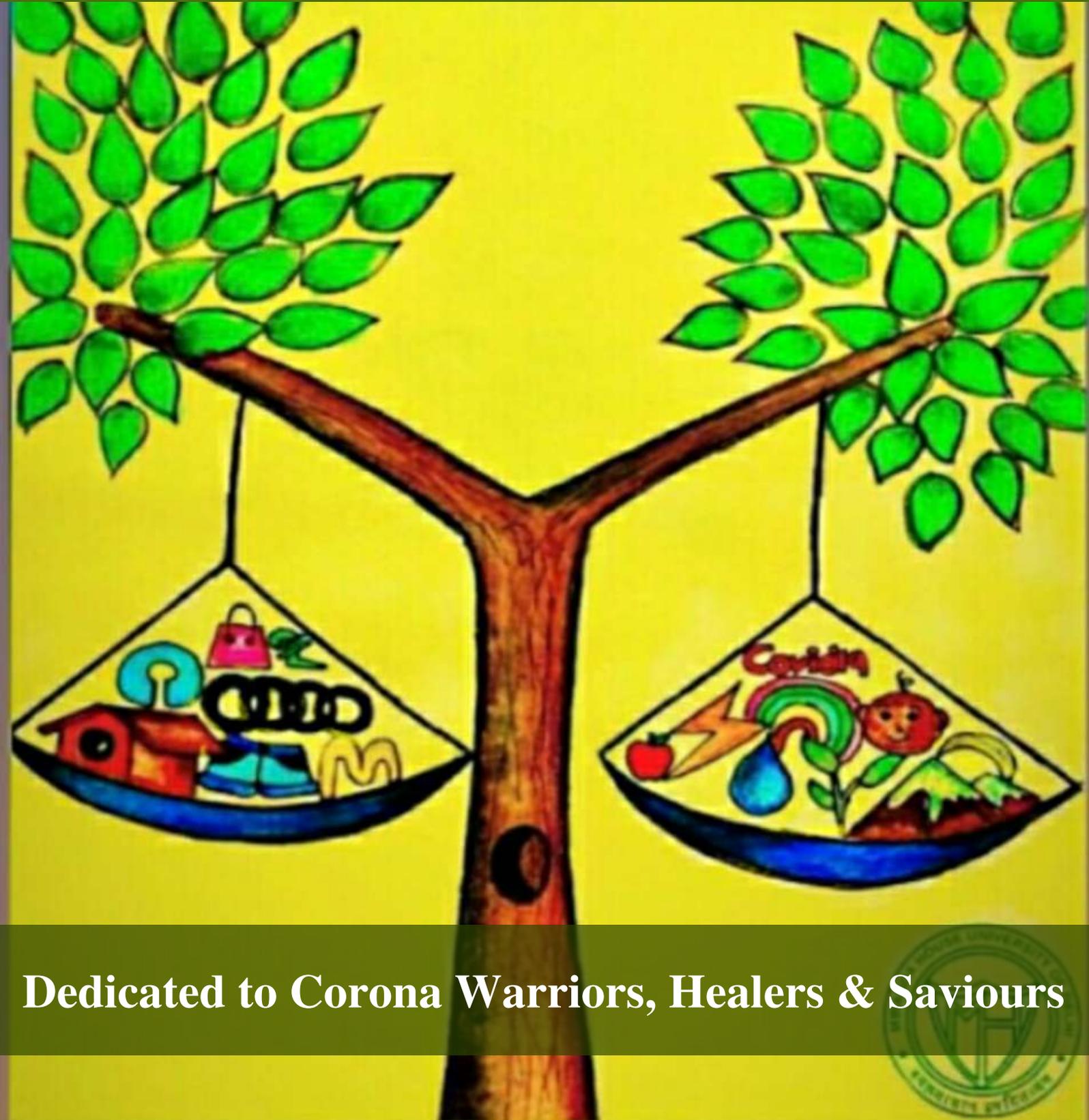


सतुला

MAGAZINE ON CONSUMER EDUCATION

JUNE 2020

NIRF Rank 1 - 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020



Dedicated to Corona Warriors, Healers & Saviours





TULA Student's Union with Faculty Advisors



Consumer Awareness Roadshow



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Divya Choudhary

Graphic Design and Layout

Surmayi Khatana

"Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory."

Mahatma Gandhi



"It is not the employer who pays the wages. Employers only handle the money. It is the customer who pays the wages."

Henry Ford

From the Principal's Desk

It is indeed an honour for me to write a message for the Santulan magazine of the TULA Club of the college. These are difficult times and we are negotiating our lives through transformed modes due to the exigencies brought in by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are striving to overcome challenges and learn new skills in order to cope with the changing situation, both in teaching-learning as well in our personal spaces. In order to move forward in any situation of tumultuous change, we lean on our closest circles. We draw inspiration from our mentors. We reach out to others to support them. Santulan brings to us the balance and harmony that we require in this moment of crisis. I will use this opportunity, therefore, to speak about Dr Jayashree Pillai, my senior colleague who is the main founder of TULA and Santulan. In fact, Dr Pillai is the life force of the Department of Political Science and one of the most important pillars of Miranda House. However, this is not about writing a tribute to Dr Pillai. This is about creating an understanding about how institution-building is drawn from individual strength and initiative.



When Dr Pillai thought of a Consumer Club, most of us were not completely convinced of the idea. However, through lengthy consultative meetings over several rounds of hot tea, signature samosas from the Miranda House canteen and her home-cooked, delicious melt in the mouth upma, she convinced us about its significance. Then came the more difficult decision to be made. Should it be a college society with access to student union funds or should it be a club located within the department giving it a certain creative independence? Well, you guessed it right! With her rational persuasion, her conviction, her firmness and yes, the mouth-watering upma, again we were won over! So this is the first lesson Dr Pillai taught us about innovation and democratic decision-making:

Lesson 1: Believe in your own goals and convince people through consultations which are democratic, sensitive yet firm.

The club was born with a lot of fanfare and young students rallied around with their creative ideas and energy. We joined them in the process albeit in a cautious way... Mostly on the sides. But Dr Pillai would have none of that! She led from the front by planning activities, seminars and bringing in her experiential sense of consumer rights. Her personal stories became the rallying ground of TULA. It was not an anecdotal personal narrative. It was a story of triumph and will. It got included in CBSE textbooks as an important example of consumer rights case studies. So this is the second lesson she taught us about innovation and democratic decision making:

Lesson 2: The main principle for creativity is the ability to practice it. Practice, preach and then innovate.

The next step for TULA was to develop the critical connection between academics and activism. 'Voila', the certificate course came into being. Dr Pillai got us all together to ensure students enrolled for the course. It was a time when not many people had heard about certificate courses! A self-funded course after classes is more of a norm now but in 2007 it was just the opposite. Dr Pillai in her characteristic style delegated the tasks with a handle on the hierarchy. This is her core expertise developed by years of teaching and imbibing the principles of public administration. So we strategized a well-formulated course work and lawyers, activists and academics as resource persons. She built-in research work and presentations for students and a motivational certificate at the end of the course. I know all this sounds mundane now to you but you have to understand it in the context of its times. So, the third lesson for us:

Lesson 3: Clarity drives change. Be clear and plan systematically. Deliver in a time-bound manner.

Then came the magazine. Most societies or clubs in colleges did not have a magazine till then but Dr Pillai was insistent on documentation and writing. But, for her the basic rule for writing was originality. It was much before all anti-plagiarism software tests. Dr Pillai was the litmus test for plagiarism. With a glance of her eye, she could tell you which article was a cut and paste job and which was not! She was encouraging and motivating but her words of praise about writing had to be earned. So I remember I always worked hard when it came to my contribution to the Santulan Magazine. In fact, an article that I wrote for the Santulan finds pride of place in my 2010 Macmillan edited volume on Understanding Social Inequality: Concerns of Human Rights, Gender and Environment. That is the fourth lesson learnt from her:

Lesson 4: Originality and authenticity is the test of quality and excellence. Speak and write from your heart and let your conscience shape and mould your thoughts.

It has been 11 years since the establishment of TULA. Usually, the initial enthusiasm about any initiative starts waning and the project begins languishing by a certain time. However, TULA has maintained its vigour and quality of discussions, the formal structure of its programmes along with its rigour and excellence. It is a learning and training ground for both faculty and students for organisational skills, coordination, awareness on consumer rights and laws and research and training. Students benefit immensely by it. It also provides them forward linkages in terms of employment and employability. It teaches them balance. So this is Dr Pillai's contribution.... our fifth lesson:

Lesson 5: Continuity and sustainability is the yardstick of success. It is not how much you achieve but the lessons you learn and the work-life balance you maintain which is the true essence of your human achievement.

These five lessons learnt in the process of the establishment and continuance of TULA from Dr Pillai can be applied to any life situation. It provides us with a map for visionary plans. In these uncertain times more so than ever these lessons are significant for us. Both TULA and Santulan stand for justice and balance. These are the core values of Miranda House too... The core values of any human society.

I congratulate the wonderful team of TULA especially Dr Pillai, Dr Hena Singh and Ms Shruti Sharma and the students associated with it. Dr Hena Singh's contribution to the growth and development of TULA is immense. Her perseverance and her ability to maintain a wide network of friends and resource persons led to the strengthening of TULA. A word about Ms Shruti Sharma, who has been associated with the initiative with equal passion and enthusiasm. She has also excelled in overcoming life challenges and providing anchor ship to the society. Many lessons to be learnt from her. But that is for another day!

I congratulate the present President Vyshnavi Pulluru and the editorial team, Maanya Kamble, Mansi Sharma, Surmayi Khatana, Ananya, Kriti Jalan, Krishnendu Pillai, Aanchal, Durdanah Masoodi, Sakshi Singhvi, Muskan Mehlatat, of whose task is mammoth in the face of the pandemic but who have revealed stellar leadership qualities. Consumer rights and responsibilities go hand in hand. Let us be ethical and aware consumers. Also to the Department of Political Science and it's dedicated faculty members Dr Purnima Roy, Dr Krishna Kusuma Subha, Dr Namrata Singh, Ms Pushpa Singh, Dr Skylab Sahu, Dr Rajni Kumari, Ms Sonali Chitalkar, Dr Rashmi Gopi and the fresh entrants Dr Mhadeno Jungi, Dr Surabhi, Mr Dushyant Kumar, Dr Ceejun, Dr Asutosh, Ms Jigyasa and Mr Abhishank for nourishing and nurturing TULA and Santulan.

Let us all be Corona Healers. The terminology of warriors may be used for frontline workers especially doctors and other health and sanitation workers. I introduce the title of Corona Healers to all of us. With empathy and generosity let us reach out to each other in whatever ways we can...whatever little we can do. Let us appreciate and validate each other. Let us create an enabling environment for all around us. Let us speak for social justice and an equal balance of rights and responsibilities for all of us. TULA for Social Justice and Santulan for equal rights and responsibilities!

Stay safe and stay well.

Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda

**Acting Principal,
Miranda House**



From the Convenor's Desk

The year 2020 will go down in history as a year of frightening calamity. COVID-19 turned the whole world into a place where freedom was restricted, movements were curtailed, and life lost its charm that made the world an energetic place of action. People were forced into their homes, markets and malls stood deserted, traffic was reduced to almost nil, and the skies were clear of flights as airports were closed down. An eerie stillness not seen before in our lives spread throughout the globe.

The picture of barren streets and markets in itself indicates the scare faced by humans as a species. The so-called advanced nations, in the end, had to bend their knees in fear and seek help from developing countries as infections increased and the death toll mounted. For everyone who laughed it off as a Chinese predicament, had to come to terms with the havoc it vested in their countries.

I am writing to you all with a heavy heart and pray and hope that each one of you, and your family and friends are doing fine, as we are moving deeper into the pandemic COVID-19. Life is a hard journey, it's often a lonely place to be in. Reaching for help can be misconstrued for weakness. We must understand that our safety net is our own family, friends, teachers, and mentors. It should be considered as a joint journey for all of us. And in this journey, if some of us need to lean on someone else, we should not feel ashamed.

Our Consumer Club TULA came into being in February 2007. In over a decade long existence we have crossed many milestones and today we are one of the very few active consumer clubs at the University of Delhi. 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 increasingly 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 and the environment. This process has grown into a threat to the very existence of the human race, and the COVID-19 onslaught is an example. 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. It has to be seen whether the visible changes in consumer behaviour due to COVID-19 will be lasting or not.

The gory images that are forthcoming will be a slump in every market for months until the world can breathe easily. The labour class, especially migrant workers, have lost their footing as a result of COVID-19 and the widespread lockdowns and restrictions.

The statistical analysis of the impact of COVID will have to wait until the disease settles. In the lockdown scenario where the priority is to contain the spread of the virus and save as many lives as possible, we have to depend on what we can observe. The world is at a standstill, people are waiting for the disastrous period to come to an end. We truly live in strange times. There have been virus outbreaks in the past – SARS in China in 2002, Ebola in Western Africa in 2014, MERS outbreak in the Republic of Korea in 2015, Nipah in Kerala in 2018.



It has been a long time since the world has seen an epidemic of this scale and scope. Unlike man-made calamities, the virus is agnostic to the economical and social status of a region. All countries regardless of them being developed or not have been affected. This virus has indeed demonstrated that globalisation can be at times a double-edged sword. The only hope for us are the COVID warriors, healers, and saviours.

I would like to thank all those who have had a role in bringing out the present issue of Santulan which has focused on a variety of innovative themes. Our Principal Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda has always been there for us, with her constructive inputs. She has been one of the founder members of TULA and as head of the institution she is now leading from the front. Under her guidance, TULA has progressed leaps and bounds. A lot of work has gone into collecting, compiling, and editing the articles. I would like to congratulate the TULA Union President, Vyshnavi, and her team consisting of Aishwarya, Bharti, and Vaishali for doing exemplary work over the whole academic year. The Editorial Team consisting of Surmayi, Durdanah, Ananya, Mansi, Maanya, Muskan, Sakshi, Kriti, Anchal, and Krishnendu has done a great job under the guidance of faculty members Dr Hena Singh and Shruti Sharma. As co-convenor, Dr Hena Singh plays a very valuable role in planning, facilitating, and mobilising resources for conducting various activities and events. Ms. Shruti Sharma's devotion to the cause of TULA has helped the group immensely in achieving its goals, I wish that both of them continue to contribute with the same zeal to TULA. It's through their effort that we have this issue of Santulan in our hands. I would also like to mention the role played by each member 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 about consumer education, rights, and responsibilities. Let us hope to bring about an attitude shift, not dictated by consumerism, but motivated by awareness.

Thank you.

Dr. Jayashree Pillai

**Convenor,
TULA Miranda House Consumer Club**



President's Note

Greetings from TULA, Miranda House Consumer Club.

It gives me immense pleasure and pride to announce the release of the Annual Magazine of TULA, 'SANTULAN', which aims at enlightening consumers by bringing in a plethora of creativity by the students of Miranda House. I am extremely grateful for the privilege to be the President of one of the only two Consumer Clubs in the ambit of Delhi University which upholds the slogan of consumerism high and are determined to spread the word around. The club has been dedicated to spreading the message of consumerism with a wide variety of activities that aim to educate students and try to evolve them for the better.



2019-20 was another fruitful year filled with enthusiasm as a fresh batch entered the society with their new outlooks and excitement to learn more. It was wonderful to see new students coming forth and showing inquisitiveness about Consumer Rights and bringing in fresh ideas and their outlook. We had numerous activities that served as a means to the ends of our aim of consumer education. The three-day workshop saw a footfall of more than 120 students who participated in the roadshow as well. Along with that, we participated in the Inter-College Nukkad Natak Competition organized by the Rural Electrification Corporation, Government of India, and also various other activities that were conducted on a regular basis coupled with Research and Study Sessions.

The Research and Study Sessions opened up the ground for discussions and various important topics were discussed.

A heartfelt thanks to our constant source of guidance, Dr Jayashree Pillai, our Convenor and Mrs Shruti Sharma, and Mrs Heena Singh, Faculty Members, who have helped us at every step. Their guidance motivated me in evolving the leader in me. I am grateful to the TULA Union- Aishwarya Sharma (Vice-President), Bharti Khandelwal (General Secretary), Vaishali Chaudhary (Treasurer) and the extended union for being a great team.

I am indebted to the respected teachers and the TULA team for their hard work in the smooth release of the magazine despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and in taking forward the movement of consumer activism around us. I am grateful to the Editorial Team who have worked tirelessly for the issue of this magazine, I really hope that all the members of TULA had a learning experience and garnered memories for life during the year.

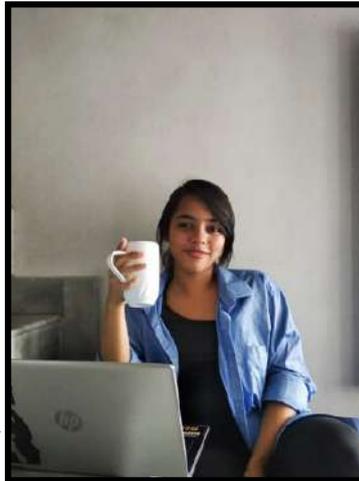
Thank you!

Vyshnavi Pulluru
B.A. Programme
Third Year



Editors' Note

Paul Theodore Heyne once said, “The gap in our economy is between what we have and what we think we ought to have- and that is a moral problem, not an economic one.” This is a thought that very deeply resonates with the ethos of the concept of consumerism and something we have attempted to engage with. The Indian Consumerist discourse, drawing for Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophies and belief that “There is enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed”, has undergone significant changes in the past year - with the coming of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, to the Goods and Services Tax, to increasing awareness about various issues pertaining to consumerism and the expanding and evolving consumer movement, to a very drastic change in the consumption habits of the masses due to COVID-19 worldwide. In an attempt to look at this evolution and its transcendent nature, we bring to you a culmination of articles, poems, case studies, illustrations, and personal observations on the various nuances of Consumerism.



We as consumers are manipulated and cheated by dishonest and illicit tricksters who hide in plain sight. Thus, making informed choices is imperative. The existence of many malpractices in society demands our constant vigilance for the protection of the interests of consumers. This edition tries to open up the reader’s eyes to many of these issues, upholding its ethos of ‘Caveat Emptor’ (buyer beware). For that purpose, the magazine has been divided into 8 broad themes to capture the major issues implicit in consumerism and the market system. For Charles Darwin once said, “ If we admit at first the cause, the mind still craves to know whence it came and how it arose.”, a question very significant for us to engage and negotiate with in order to understand where exactly the cancerous ideology of growing for growth arose in human conscience and the human condition, and the rightness or wrongness therein.

We extend our wholehearted thanks and gratitude to all of the students and professors who contributed to give SANTULAN the shape and form in which it exists before the reader. We are very grateful for having received direction from our Principal, Dr Bijaylaxmi Nanda. We extend our deepest gratitude to Dr Jayashree Pillai, Convenor, TULA, for constantly inspiring us to get better, and Ms Shruti Sharma, Faculty Member TULA for her constant support at every step. We are also grateful to Dr Hena Singh for her immense support and cooperation. We are deeply indebted to all of them for making SANTULAN possible.

We also take this opportunity to extend our immense gratitude to Surmayi Khatana, a member of the Editorial Board and a second-year student of Political Science at Miranda House, who did a commendable job at creating the templates for this edition of Santulan and helping us to build and put the magazine together. Taking this magazine to the online forum would not have been possible without her.

We are deeply obliged to the entire Editorial Team and Creative Team of TULA for having helped us throughout this journey.

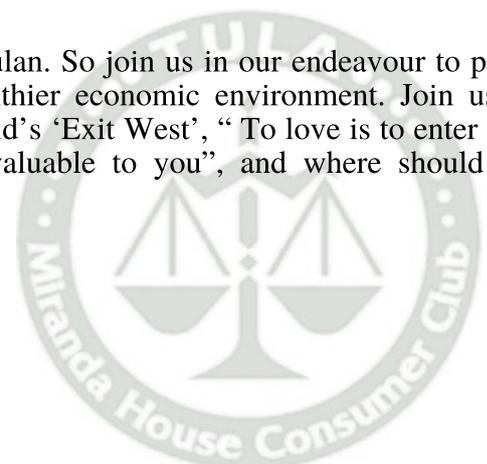
It is extremely heartening for us to bring to you the 2020 edition of Santulan. So join us in our endeavour to point out, debunk, and interrogate these activities to create a fairer and healthier economic environment. Join us in analysing the idea of love expressed by Sayeed at the end in Mohsin Hamid’s ‘Exit West’, “ To love is to enter into the inevitability of one day not being able to protect what is most valuable to you”, and where should we normatively and empirically stand when the love is for commodities.

Happy reading and viewing!

Editors

Maanya Kamble
B.A. (H) Political Science
Second Year

Mansi Sharma
B.A. (H) Political Science
Second Year



Editorial Board

Learning was the purpose I joined this vertical. And towards the end of the session I really feel like an enlightened one. Thank you and congratulations to the TULA society for the publishing of this wonderful piece of knowledge and hard-work. - *Ananya, B.A. (H) Political Science, First Year*

As the world grapples with ramifications of a global outbreak, it has become altogether more important for people to be aware about their rights pertaining to safe food, healthcare and other products.

We are deeply obliged to the entire Editorial Team and Creative Team of TULA for having helped us throughout this journey. - *Kriti Jalan, B.A. (H) Political Science, First Year*

Being recognised and accepted in little things is what we love , I was lucky to have editorials heads who made sure of that. - *Krishnendu Pillai, B.A. Programme, First Year*

Hundereds of text messages, midnight phone calls discussing ideas, video calls, and hours of work by every individual involved have led to Santulan 2020. The true learning of being on the editorial board lies in being able to read a plethora of perspectives and getting an insight into the diverse understanding and minds of our peers and their interactions with consumer affairs. - *Surmayi Khatana, B.A. (H) Political Science, Second Year*

Warm Regards

The Editorial Board

Aanchal	B. A. (H) Hindi, First Year
Ananya	B. A. (H) Political Science, First Year
Durdanah Masoodi	B. A. (H) Political Science, Second Year
Krishnendu Pillai	B. A. Programme, First Year
Kriti Jalan	B. A. (H) Political Science, First Year
Muskan Mehlawat	B. A. Programme, Third Year
Sakshi Singhvi	B. A. Programme, First Year
Surmayi Khatana	B. A. (H) Political Science, Second Year



Dr Hena Singh
Assistant Professor,
Department of Political Science

Described as the wisest man in Greece by the Temple of Apollo or the Oracle of Delphi - Socrates - was a well-known frequenter to the market, although he would never bother to buy or shop for anything. It is said that despite being well-off, Socrates used to walk barefoot, and wore the same clothes throughout the year. Such was his fascination with the marketplace that he would often be out among the people, and engage with them in dialogues. Roaming the streets of the marketplace, Socrates would engage in conversation with anyone ready to talk to him about the deep problems of life and death. Rich or poor, young or old, friend or stranger, whoever came, and would attend, could listen freely to the talk of Socrates. It is least intriguing thus that the trial of Socrates is said to have been held in the marketplace.



Per existing oral accounts, one day a curious passer-by approached Socrates and very politely asked him for the reason behind his habit of being in the market particularly when he would not buy anything. In a calm but firm tone Socrates responded that he wanted to know about the availability of all such things in the market without which he could afford to lead a contented life. Socrates' response was simple and came straight from the heart. However, for us, it unquestionably catalyses the impetus to retrospect on how the desire to lead a good life has very consistently, but falsely given way to the understanding that a good life is indeed synonymous to possessive capacities where in a world of consumerist values and creed holding more and more is the norm. Naturally, the modern world we live in has ubiquity of discontentment, acquisitiveness and greed so much so that some philosophers see that as the defining trait of human nature.

The basic idea behind narrating Socrates' account however is simply to open up to you and to let you know how it has actually put me on to the path of introspection. Over the last two months it has actually led me to be reminiscent of how lured by the soft and glossy advertisements, I would constantly be on the prowl for the sale of clothes from big brands, and how without even thinking twice, I would never lose any opportunity to grab all those stuffs that would fit my size and be of my choice. It was in this insane indulgence of grabbing and buying particularly on the eve of the festivities of Holi, that we were all struck by the pandemic called COVID-19. The consequential lockdown that followed put a full stop on my shopping spree.

As is known, COVID -19 is a pandemic with globally rampant impacts and the only way of dealing with it (at least as of now) is by remaining domestically confined and maintaining social distancing. Markets have been shut, demands have dwindled and we have been forced to survive on what have been called basics and essentials. It is here, that I now reflect on how it is possible for us to live a reasonably modest and comfortable life without recourse to the values and creed of possessions.



In a way it has also induced the values of what I call responsible consumerism which is about contentment and need based living – a value cherished by Gandhi as he very eloquently argued – ‘Earth provides enough for every man’s need but not for every man’s greed. For Gandhi, the absolute cause of poverty lay in our acquisitive tendencies and was the root cause of all social maladies. The need as such was to analyse and examine an individual’s own accumulative and acquisitive instincts.

These binaries between the need and greed continues to be the mainstay of the discourses on the inherent problems of contemporary society. While researching for my doctoral degree in the UK, I came across a very intuitively titled book – ‘How much is enough? Money and the Good Life’. Authored by a father and son duo economists from the Warwick University-Robert and Edward Skidelsky, the book is about how consumerist society is erected on the inevitability of greed, the nomenclature of which may have changed with time and requirements but terms such as competition, conflict of interest, merit, deserts, needs, profit margins, and surplus value have continued to manifest in varied ways and have been instrumental in breeding the culture of consumption and accumulation. This culture has become strong with the advent of neoliberal economy as it has witnessed influx of goods in the market, increase in the size of pocket and consequential increase in the purchasing capacity of consumers too. One item with multiple brands has given avenues for impulsive buying. The emergence of shopping malls provides a swanky mirror to the culture of multiplicity and range of choice and consumers unintentionally become the soft targets and consequently in a shopping spree forget to differentiate between needs and surplus.

The advent of COVID-19 is undoubtedly threatening, and the consequential lockdown forces us to introspect on our behaviour as a consumer. This lockdown has taught us to live with minimum goods, making Socrates’ quest for material goods and basic urge to live without them relevant. It has inculcated in us the value of self-discipline and contentment, but most importantly it has also induced in us the feeling of concern for others, particularly for the least advantaged of us. Who after all, wouldn’t get moved by the appalling and heart wrenching stories of millions of the migrants walking barefoot or being carried as cattle in their desperate bid to get back to their roots?

Let me put a caveat here. In asking one to introspect, I am in no way being romantic or advocating the ‘back to nature call. I understand the inevitability of the march of progress both in terms of innovation and development. It is also true that it would be difficult for people to give up on the ways of living which they have been habituated to. But difficult has never been the synonym of impossible. And this is why being a self-conscious consumer becomes of utmost important. Self-Consciousness, they say is about the need to be conscious of the self. It is about extending the ‘self’ to ‘the other’– not just fellow human beings but to the entire biotic community. It naturally requires giving up a bit on the extremities of greed and the tendencies that exacerbate the lust for incessant accumulation. It is not about ending the passion of power, glory and fame, but about deepening and harvesting values of fellowship and camaraderie. Happy introspecting!

Making Sense of Local Food System in the Times of COVID: A Fresh Perspective for Contemporary Consumers



Pushpa Singh
Assistant Professor,
Department of Political Science

In the current challenging scenario of pandemic COVID-19 and the crisis it has created at several fronts needs serious contemplation. There is a need to rethink about our perceived notion of national security, food security, food production, distribution as well as consumption systems. Revisiting our understanding of agriculture in light of unprecedented hardships across the globe during the ongoing lockdown would provide crucial insight into the future vision of agrarian developments. In the present day world, most of us are active consumers and are conscious of the choices we make. In that sense, the impending COVID-19 crisis also provides us with an opportunity to realize how we could mend our attitude towards food and farming in ways that make us not just accountable consumers but very responsible ones.



This article is written to analyse the fragility of contemporary food and farming systems, especially in light of the outbreak of such a pandemic. It is essential to reflect on how we have reached where we are today, and whether this framework of our agricultural system can ensure food security during such a calamity and is capable enough to sustain us in future as well? Apparently, from time to time, nature keeps on showing her capability to rearrange the entire eco-system, reminding humans how helpless they can be in front of its formidable power. Though, our temperament remains adamant on competing with nature rather than collaborating with it. This propensity of humans emanates from the overconfidence in modern science and the modernist development, that measures progress only in economic terms and believes in centralized, homogeneous production for mass consumption. This idea has guided the agricultural modernization and technological interventions since the nineteenth century in the world and post the 1960s in India. As the Indian state has been imbued by this particular conception of developmentalism, agricultural modernization in India followed the course of the West, particularly, North America. [1]

It is common knowledge now that agricultural developmentalist discourse is based on the productivity paradigm represented by the Green Revolution. Like many other countries of the world, India streamlined its agricultural setup on modern varieties of fertilizer-responsive seeds in the 1960s. The green revolution resulted in bountiful harvest in states like Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh; immediately raising the grain yield. It is important to remember that those were the days of food-insufficiency, when India remained dependent on the PL480 wheat imports of U.S. The surge in the food production by new technological interventions, unequivocally, enabled the country to become self-reliant. However, the idea of productivism and the green revolution caught up with agricultural scientists and policymakers; so much, so that other ways of farming were declared redundant and side-tracked. As a result of that, monocultures of some cereal crops started occupying the enormous acreage, devastating the rich agro-biodiversity of the tropics.

The sustenance crops were forgotten and written off, though these were much superior in their nutritional components and palatability compared to the hybrids. More and more land was cleared for extension of agriculture. The intensification of agriculture by 1980s and 90s served the interests of private agribusinesses rather than the poor farmers.

Vanishing biodiversity creates numerous kinds of perils; pandemics being one of them. Deforestation and loss of biodiversity have resulted in many infectious diseases since the 1940s like HIV/AIDS, SARS, Ebola, Nipah including COVID-19. It has been established by the scientists that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa was the result of deforestation. The closer contact between humans and wildlife is endangering the life of both species. Similarly, intensive poultry farming is believed to have resulted in the Avian Flu. The intensification of pig farming in Malaysia was seen as responsible for the Nipah virus. Deforestation and agricultural expansion are causing rapid loss of wildlife. COVID-19 is thought to have originated from Bats, and its transmission to humans is also due to decreasing inter-species proximity and from loss of bat habitat. COVID-19 spread like a wildfire, quickly engulfing the entire globe, leaving all lines of production and distribution in tatters. As it is extremely contagious and has a high mortality rate, the countries resorted to sealing their border and prohibiting people from mixing. This response of states is understandable, as confining remains the only solution in the absence of a cure.

During this period of lockdown, the entire world has experienced the futility of overdependence on the globally integrated markets. With the sealed country and state borders and prohibited transportation, grains and vegetables could not move from the urban hubs of agribusinesses to distant places. Similarly, supply from the rural hinterland to the urban areas got disrupted. The entire supply chain got paralyzed in this unforeseen situation. Thousands of farmers have been affected as their perishable produce like vegetables rotted in the fields as these could not be transported. Generally, farmers cultivate selected crops for selling in a specified market, mostly in distant locales. As they could not reach their target market, they had to incur huge losses. Many problems of agrarian production got aggravated for being anchored in a centralized system. Had the focus been on the local supply chain, the losses would have been greatly minimized. This lockdown has taught a great lesson in the agricultural production and distribution by proving that local food system works the best.

Crucial Aspects of Local Food Supply System



COVID-crisis reinforces the requirement for a paradigm shift more than ever, as diversified and resilient agroecological food systems is the way forward. In the case of a lockdown, when the entire economy came to a halt, the farm economy was the only one still operating [2]. A panel report by World Economic Forum (WEF), *Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy* (2020) recommended the paradigm shift to diversified, resilient agroecological food systems [3]. The countries should start working for the restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and sustainable food systems. One example of such collaborative effort is the establishment of “One Planet Business for Biodiversity”, an action-oriented business coalition on biodiversity launched at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York on 23 September 2019 [4]. A coalition of 20 member nations, this is a platform formed by the world most significant food and beverage company for creating a sustainable food system. There is a clear message from such global initiatives for Indian policymakers and business houses to also proactively conserve of all kinds of biodiversity along with discovering new channels of sustainable and diverse production and distribution systems [5].



Source: Pushpa Singh, picture from the research field in Kataldi Village, Nagini, Chamba Block, Tehri Garhwal, October 2018. (farmer couple Kushal Singh and Kamala Devi harvesting rice in their field)

It has been through the Green Revolution, that the third world agriculture was made part of the global capital. Many significant pieces of literature highlight how the commercialization of peasant agriculture remains the central goal of green revolution programmes. Notable scholarships exploring this proposition are by Vandana Shiva (1991), Jack Kloppenberg (1988), Jonathan Harwood (2012), Raj Patel (2013), Eric Ross (1998) [6]. Green revolution integrated the third world peasants into the world market of hybrids and agrochemicals (Harwood, 2019) [7]. As there is enormous paraphernalia of business opportunities with an excellent profit margin around the green revolution, it has been in the interest of the industry to fuel this obsession with mass production through monocultures. The critical question is who is benefitted from all these corporate-led development paradigms in agriculture. Indeed, it is not the small and marginal farmers who reap the rewards. Instead, mass production enables the agribusiness companies to collect vast stockpiles of grains that they use for supplying the food industry, run by a cartel of agribusinesses. The surplus produced is siphoned to profitable trade destinations. In this way, this agricultural system is pro-agribusiness, not pro-poor.

Any vision of agriculture which pushes for centralized overproduction of few commercial crop varieties is entirely unsustainable. In the times when sustainability is the key goal as proclaimed under Agenda 2030 or the “Sustainable Development Goals” by the UN, adopted in 2015; there is need for urgent revision of the course of agricultural development. The idea of sustainability has been famous since publication the report by the World Commission on Environment and Development chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland: *Our Common Future* (1987). Countries must be more mindful of the soaring global human population that has already reached 7.7 billion in 2019 and is expected to reach 9.8 billion by 2050. The solutions require more creative ways of engaging with the fast depleting finite and non-renewable resources. Therefore, the need to scaling up food production must be reconciled with the necessity of improving and restoring the environment. Agriculture is most crucial for the survival of

A variety of creative solutions are available in this regard in terms of conservation agriculture, regenerative agriculture and several alternate ways of farming that are rooted in local agroecology. Unlike industrial agriculture which is structured to cater to the global market, these alternatives create robust linkages between people and food sovereignty. A significant recourse is offered by Zero Budget Natural Farming, popularized by Subhash Palekar, in which the cost of growing and harvesting plants is almost zero. A recent study by the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), Bangalore (2020) on Zero Budget Natural Farming has corroborated significant gains in farmers’ income due to reduction in the cost of energy and water use and improved yield[8]. However, all such initiatives on the front of production should be plugged in with efficient arrangements at the distribution front of agricultural produce.



Illustration: Divya Choudhary, B.A. Programme, Second Year

The recent efforts of the government seem like a welcome move in this direction. At the distribution front, the government is trying to boost agriculture by reforming the agricultural market, announced by the Finance Minister Mrs Nirmala Sitharaman a few days before. Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act has been amended to free the farmers to sell their plentiful produce only to the mandies. Now direct purchase by exporters, processors, food supermarkets and other traders of farm produce has been allowed along with permission for contract farming and storage of grains and edibles on a large scale by revising the Essential Commodity Act, 1955. Many agricultural experts like Ashok Gulati, the Indian agricultural economist and former chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (GOI), are very hopeful about significant advantages for the small and marginal farmer from such reforms [9]. Though there are some concerns for small farmers arising from these radical shifts, however, the real assessment will be possible when the fine prints of the new arrangements are actualized on the grounds.



Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be remarked that the onus of sustainability of the food system and agriculture does not rest solely on either the government or the farmer. Rather it lies in the small but sustained efforts on the part of all of us to make conscious choices as consumers. Farmers will produce what the market will demand. If we adopt the approach of ‘produce locally; consume locally’, the food supply chains will mould themselves in tandem with the local demand without disrupting ecology. These changes would be possible through more reliable platforms of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs). NABARD and Small Farmers’ Business Consortium (SFBC) has already been working on this front with 7000 registered FPOs in the country under Farmers Producers Companies Act, 2013 [10]. Such initiatives would not only provide the long term stability to the economy, but would also empower the marginal women farmers. Incorporation of mandatory one lady director in the board of Farmer Producer Company makes the FPO eligible for SFAC equity grant support scheme of Rs 15 lakhs per FPOs. In this way, repositioning of diverse grassroots initiatives and supporting them as consumers offers a fresh perspective for contemporary food, farming and agrarian systems.

[1] For detailed discussion in this regard, kindly refer Debal Deb (2009) *Beyond Developmentality: Constructing Inclusive Freedom and Sustainability*, Routledge, London, New York.

[2] Pravesh Sharma (2020) Can agriculture revive the rural economy? Available <https://idronline.org/can-agriculture-revive-the-rural-economy/> accessed 16.05.20.

[3] Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy (2020), World Economic Forum, available http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_New_Nature_Economy_Report_2020.pdf accessed 16.05.20.

[4] For details on “One Planet Business for Biodiversity”, Kindly refer <https://op2b.org> accessed 16.05.20.

[5] “Pandemic, Biodiversity, Business – What India Can Do” 2020, Sustainability Next, available at <https://sustainabilitynext.in/new-top-report/may-2020/pandemic-biodiversity-business-whats-can-india-do/> accessed 05.05.20.

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[7] Jonathan Harwood (2019) “Was the Green Revolution Intended to Maximise Food Production?” *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, Vol.17, Issue 4, p.312-325.

[8] Zero Budget Natural Farming Cuts Water, Energy Use by Half, available <https://sustainabilitynext.in/new-top-report/may-2020/zero-budget-natural-farming-cuts-water-energy-use-by-half> accessed 05.05.20.

[9] Refer to interview of Ashok Gulati by Jyoti Malhotra, The Print available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaYGqBKAUj8> accessed on 17.05.20.

[10] Ch Radhika Rani and R Divakar (2020) “Common Facility Centre: A Rallying Point for SHG-FPO Convergence”, *Down to Earth* available <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/agriculture/common-facility-centre-a-rallying-point-for-shg-fpo-convergence-71127> accessed 18.05.20.

COVID19 and Changed Consumer Behaviour in India



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The Coronavirus hit India in February 2020. As the country responded to this threat on 24 March 2020, the Government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, limiting movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of India as a preventive measure. The lockdown was placed when the number of confirmed positive coronavirus cases in India was approximately 500.

As the end of the first lockdown period approached, state governments and other advisory committees recommended extending the lockdown. The governments of Odisha and Punjab extended the state lockdowns to 1 May 2020.

Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal, and Telangana did the same. On 14 April 2020, Prime minister Narendra Modi extended the nationwide lockdown until 3 May, with a conditional relaxation after 20 April for the regions where the spread had been contained. On 1 May 2020, the Government of India extended the nationwide lockdown further by two weeks until 17 May 2020. The Government has divided the entire nation into three zones—green, red, and orange—with relaxations applied accordingly. One of the earliest effects of the current situation on consumers has been a massive decline in spending. Consumers have shifted toward digital channels, products, and services across categories, but that shift has not come close to offsetting the overall reduction in spending. In real terms, there has been a total decimation of purchasing power due to the loss of jobs and incomes.

According to the global research firm Nielsen “six key consumer behavior threshold levels” indicate the shifts in global consumer behaviour.[1] These six are: firstly, proactive health-minded buying which indicates consumer interest in products that support overall maintenance of health and wellness. Secondly, reactive health management wherein consumers place a priority on products related to virus containment, health, and public safety. Thirdly, pantry preparations which indicates a spike in-store visits as consumers stockpile shelf-stable foods and health safety products. Fourthly, quarantined living preparation wherein online shopping increases; store visits decline; more out-of-stocks; supply chain is strained. Fifthly, restricted living wherein shopping trips are restricted, online fulfilment is limited, and limited stock affects pricing. And finally, living a new normal where daily routines are resumed but with a new cautiousness about health. Permanent shifts in the supply chain, e-commerce patterns, and hygiene protocols.

While this may be true of Global markets and consumers we need to look in more deeply into economic indicators related to India. With a near collapse of markets everywhere and the total destruction of supply and demand both, the Indian consumer is also reducing spending. With online options no longer available due to lockdown conditions, the question is whether the Indian consumer has gone local?



While the lockdown resulted in panic buying and people hoarding essential items such as rice, wheat, packaged food, home care products, etc. Reports suggest that people did not stock up much on confectionery and beverages, but only rushed to stock up on essentials. Local brands and Kirana stores have made almost a 65 per cent recovery after plunging to zero sales in the period of the first lockdown. In many areas in India, there were severe restrictions in moving out of local containment zones. Therefore consumers were forced to go local. Large supermarkets and malls were closed again leading to localization.

According to McKinsey, in India, the prevailing sentiment is concerned around safety, overall public health, and taking care of family members. Three weeks into a national lockdown, Indian consumers remain optimistic for a quick economic recovery but are spending only on essentials.

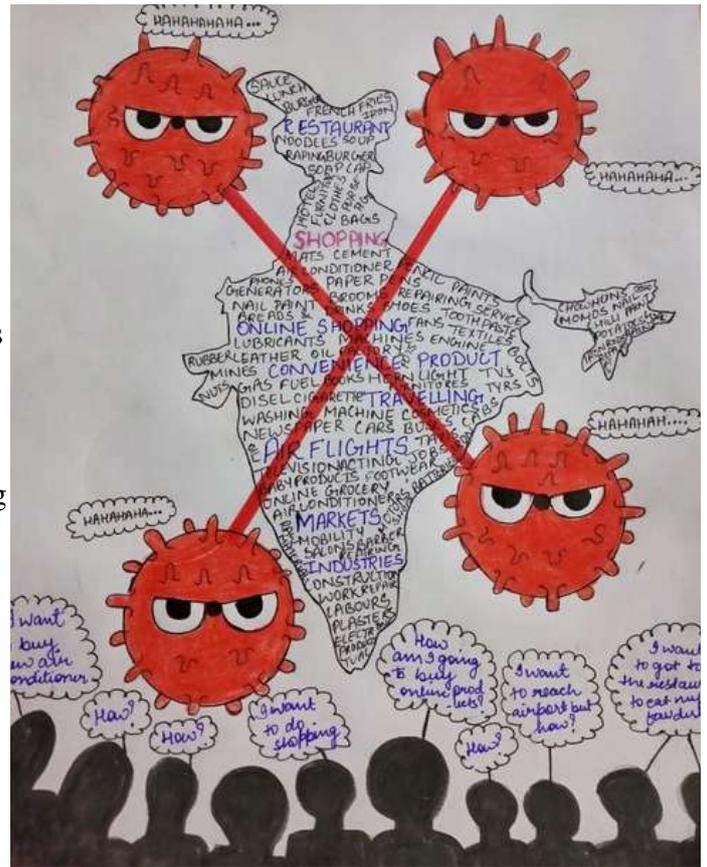


Illustration: Manasvita Puri, B.A. Programme, Second Year

If the trend continues consumers may be averse to moving back to larger retail stores and continue to localize in the Kirana store next door due to fears of social distancing and spread of the Coronavirus.

[1] “COVID-19: Tracking the Impact on FMCG, Retail and Media,” Nielsen, <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2020/covid-19-tracking-the-impact-on-fmcg-and-retail>

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मैं एक ग्राहक हूँ
अपना अधिकार जानती हूँ
पर क्या छिन जाने पर अपना हक माँगती हूँ?
मुझे समय समय पर कभी भ्रमित तो
कभी चकित किया जाता है,
विज्ञापनों से मुझे कभी जागरूक तो
कभी आकर्षित किया जाता है।
बाज़ार की भूल-भुलडुपों में गुम-
सी कभी हो जाती हूँ।
हाँ मैं एक ग्राहक हूँ
अपना अधिकार जानती हूँ
पर क्या छिन जाने पर अपना हक माँगती हूँ?

मेरे लिए कोर्ट है,
मेरे पास वोट है,
हेल्पलाइन नंबर है,
गारंटी है, वॉरंटी है,
बिल है, कंप्यूटर सेल है,
कंप्यूटर प्रोटेक्शन एक्ट है,
पर इन सबके साथ भी क्या मैं खुद को सुरक्षित मानती हूँ?
हाँ मैं एक ग्राहक हूँ
अपना अधिकार जानती हूँ
पर क्या छिन जाने पर अपना हक माँगती हूँ?

देश में बीमारी आने पर जब
अस्पताल अपने दाम बढ़ा दें,
जब कुछ राशन के सामान की कमी
होने पर दुकानदार एम. आर. पी. से ज़्यादा ले,
10 रुपए के मास्क जब
100 में मिलें
तब क्या मैं अपनी आवाज़ उठा पाती हूँ,
और अगर उठा भी लूँ तो क्या
उसे अपनी नीति-निर्देशकों तक पहुँचा पाती हूँ?
हाँ मैं एक ग्राहक हूँ
अपना अधिकार जानती हूँ
पर क्या छिन जाने पर अपना हक माँगती हूँ?

ज़रूरत बदलाव की है,
पर बड़ा प्रश्न है कि बदलाव कहाँ और किसमें लाना है,
बाज़ार में? सरकार में? समाज में?
कानून में?
बदलाव हमें सबसे पहले लाना है
नागरिक समाज में, जिसका हिस्सा
मैं हूँ, आप हैं, हम सब हैं
आवाज़ उठाते रहना होगा,
अपने अधिकार जताते रहना होगा,
इस बाज़ार को चलाते हम हैं
इसीलिए ही कंप्यूटर किंग हैं
इस बात को खुद को समझाते
और दोहराते रहना होगा
तभी बुलंदी से मैं कह पाऊँगी
कि हाँ मैं एक ग्राहक हूँ
अपना अधिकार जानती हूँ
छिन जाने पर अपना हक माँगती हूँ।



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आओ तुला का करें सम्मान, रहें जागरूक रहें सावधान
इस बाज़ार की दुनिया में सब कुछ बिकता है
धन ही नहीं, धर्म भी
इंसान ही नहीं, भगवान भी
पालना ही नहीं, कफन भी।
हार-जीत, मुनाफा, नुकसान तक सीमित सी होने लगी है यह दुनिया
जी हां, है यह बाजारू दुनिया
सब कुछ बिकता है यहां।



विज्ञापनों में लगी होड़ है, दुविधा हम आखिर जाएं किस ओर
तभी स्मरण आया वह नारा "जागो ग्राहक जागो "आखिर फैसला है तुम्हारा
रहो सजग रखो पर ध्यान
प्रगति है जरूरी, पर रहो सावधान
यही है संतुलित समझदार ग्राहकों की पहचान।



Illustration: Supriya Bhandari, B.A. (H) Economics, Second Year

Consumer vs Medical Negligence



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Meaning of Medical Negligence

Poonam Verma v. Ashwin Patel & Ors

In this case, the Supreme Court delved into the issue of what is medical negligence. In this context, the Court held as under: “***Negligence has many manifestations — it may be active negligence, collateral negligence, comparative negligence, concurrent negligence, continued negligence, criminal negligence, gross negligence, hazardous negligence, active and passive negligence, willful or reckless negligence, or negligence per se.***”



Black’s Law Dictionary defines ***Negligence per se*** as — conduct, whether of action or omission, which may be declared and treated as negligence without any argument or proof as per the particular surrounding circumstances, either because it is in violation of a statute or valid municipal ordinance, or because it is so palpably opposed to the dictates of common prudence that it can be said without hesitation or doubt that no careful person would have been guilty of it. As a general rule, the violation of public duty, enjoined by law for the protection of person or property, so constitutes.

Medical “Service” under Section 2(1) (o) of Consumer Protection Act, 1986

In the *Indian Medical Association v. V.P. Shantha & Others* case, a three-Judge Bench of the Supreme Court held that service rendered to a patient by a medical practitioner by way of consultation, diagnosis and treatment, both medicinal and surgical, would fall within the ambit of ‘service’ as defined in Section 2(1) (o) of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Deficiency of service has to be judged by putting it to test of reasonable skill and care which is applicable in action for damages for negligence. The Court has observed the following:-

“In the matter of professional liability, professions differ from occupations for the reason that professions operate in spheres where success cannot be achieved in every case and very often success or failure depends upon factors beyond the professional man’s control. The Court followed a rational approach which requires that professional men should possess a certain minimum degree of competence and that they should exercise reasonable care in the discharge of their duties. Generally, a professional man owes to his client a duty in tort as well as in contract to exercise reasonable care in giving advice or performing services”.



In a way it has also induced the values of what I call 'responsible consumerism', which is about contentment and need-based living – a value cherished by Gandhi as he very eloquently argued – “Earth provides enough for every man’s need but not for every man’s greed.” For Gandhi, the absolute cause of poverty lay in our acquisitive tendencies and was also the root cause of all social maladies. The need as such was to analyse and examine an individual’s own accumulative and acquisitive instincts.

The Supreme Court in the *Bhalchandra Babu & Another Vs. State of Maharashtra* Case defined negligence as an omission to do something which a reasonable man, guided upon those considerations which ordinarily regulate the conduct of human affairs, would do, or doing something which a prudent and reasonable man would not do; criminal negligence is the gross and culpable neglect or failure to exercise that reasonable and proper care and precaution to guard against injury either to the public generally or to an individual in particular, which having regard to all the circumstances out of which the charge has arisen, it was the imperative duty of the accused person to have adopted.

In the *Achutrao Haribhau Khodwa & Others v. State of Maharashtra & Others* Case, the Court was of the opinion that in the very nature of the medical profession, skills differ from doctor to doctor and more than one alternative courses of treatment are available, all admissible. Negligence cannot be related to a doctor so long as he is performing his duties to the best of his abilities and with due care and caution. The choice of a doctor for a particular course of action apart from the others available would not be liable if the course of action chosen by him was acceptable to the medical profession.

According to **304A of the IPC Medical Negligence is** (*Kurban Hussein Mohammedali Rangawalla v. State of Maharashtra*) defined as death caused by negligence, the statement of law given by Sir Lawrence Jenkins in the *Emperor v. Omkar Rampratap* Case, was cited with approval: “To impose criminal liability under Section 304A, Indian Penal Code, it is necessary that the death should have been the direct result of a rash and negligent act of the accused, and that act must be the proximate and efficient cause without the intervention of another’s negligence. It must be the *causa causans*; it is not enough that it may have been the *causa sine qua non*.”

There is no straitjacket formula to determine as to when the cause of action has accrued to the consumer. In *V.N.Shrikhande vs Anita Sena Fernandes* Case [(2011) 1 SCC 53], the Supreme Court had held that in cases of medical negligence, no straitjacket formula can be applied for determining as to when the cause of action has accrued to the consumer. Each case is to be decided on its own facts or grounds i.e. medical negligence varies from case to case. If the effect of negligence on the doctor’s part or any person associated with him is patent, the cause of action will be deemed to have arisen on the date when the act of negligence was committed.



On the other hand, if the effect of negligence is latent, then the cause of action will arise on the date when the patient or his representative-complainant discovers the harm/injury caused due to such act or the date when the patient or his representative-complainant could have, by the exercise of reasonable diligence discovered the act constituting negligence.

Guidelines to be followed in deciding medical negligence cases

In the *Kusum Sharma & Ors v. Batra Hospital & Medical Research* Case, the Supreme Court has issued the following guidelines to be followed while deciding whether the medical professional is guilty of medical negligence:

- Negligence is the breach of duty, it can be an omission of an act which a normal man, guided by his care and considerations which ordinarily regulate and control the conduct of human affairs, would do, or doing something which a prudent and common man would not intend to do.
- Important ingredient of offence is negligence. The negligence need to be put forth by the prosecution must be culpable or gross and it is not that the negligence should merely based upon merely an error of judgment.
- The medical professional is expected to bring a reasonable degree of skill and knowledge and must exercise a reasonable degree of care. There is neither the very highest nor the lowest degree of care and competence judged in the light of the given circumstances in each case in which the law requires.
- A medical practitioner would be liable only where his conduct fell below that of the standards of a reasonably competent practitioner in his field.
- In the realm of diagnosis and treatment, there is scope for genuine difference of opinion and one professional doctor is clearly not negligent merely because his conclusion differs from that of other professional doctors.
- The medical professional is often called upon to adopt a procedure that involves a higher element of risk, but which he honestly believes as providing greater chances of success for the patient rather than a procedure involving lesser risk but higher chances of failure. Just because a doctor is handling the high risky illness to bring the patient out of his/her suffering ultimately which did not yield the desired result is not amount to any kind of negligence.
- Negligence cannot be attributed to a doctor as long as he performs his duties with reasonable skill and competence. Merely because the doctor chooses one course of action in preference to the other one available, he would not be liable if the course of action chosen by him was acceptable to the medical profession.



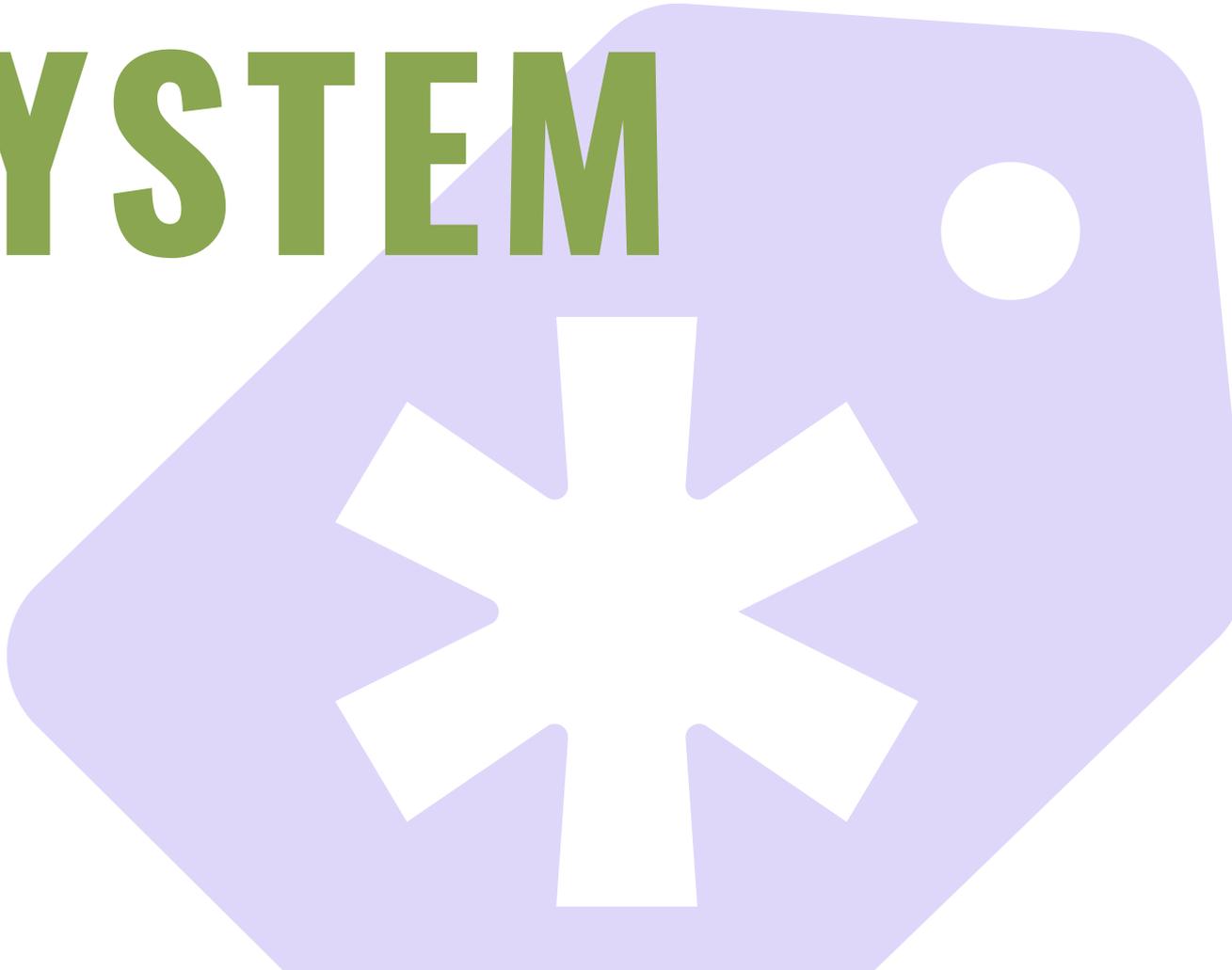
- It is the bound duty and obligation of the civil society to ensure that the medical professionals are not unnecessarily harassed or humiliated so that they can perform their professional duties without fear and apprehension
- The medical professional at present times needs to be saved from such a group of complainants who use the criminal process as a tool for pressurizing the medical professionals/hospitals particularly private hospitals or clinics for extracting uncalled for compensation. Such malicious proceedings need to be abandoned against medical practitioners.
- The medical professionals need to get protection so long as they perform their duties with reasonable skill and competence and in the interest of the patients.

In the *Dr. M. Kochar vs Ispita Seal Case*, National Commission said that “No Cure/No Success not led to Medical Negligence.” The Commission was confronted with the issue of deficiency in services in the IVF procedure performed by the Doctor. The Commission while giving its judgement made reference to medical literature relating to the IVF procedure and arrived at the conclusion that No cure/ no success in IVF is not medical negligence. It was observed that IVF is a complex series of procedures that are used to treat infertility and assist with the conception of a child and it involves many technical steps. The hospital or any treating doctor is not required to give assurances or guarantees of the treatment. According to the medical literature, the chances of having a healthy baby using IVF depend on many factors or conditions, it widely depends on the patient’s age and the cause and stage of infertility. Apart from it, IVF can be time-consuming, expensive, and invasive.

The woman’s age is the most important factor that determines the success rate of IVF procedures and the presence of vaginal infection does not change the pregnancy rate. The IVF success rate is highest for women between 24 and 34 as this is the period when they are at their peak fertility levels. At any stage, the chance of IVF success varies, depending on age and personal health circumstances. The Commission opined that there was no deficiency or lapses in the duty of care on the part of the treating Doctor or OP in the case. Hence the Commission could not find medical negligence in this case.

Parts of this article have been taken from various Case Laws and the Indian Penal Code 1860

MARKET SYSTEM



Gears and Dynamics

Marketing: A Complex Apparatus



Aishwarya Sharma
B.A.(H) Philosophy
Second Year

The market being a simple apparatus to facilitate the exchange of goods and services, that started as a barter, has now evolved into a gigantic model where one market affects the other one. None of us is oblivious to the trade war between the US and China, and its implications on the global economy.

No doubt that with the advent of markets, consumers have been able to exercise their right to choose a product in the best way possible by being able to choose from a great number of products. It has opened horizons for consumers and producers and has opened various avenues of income.

And none of us is unaware of the cut-throat competition by which these brands reach out to every consumer and the huge amounts spent on the same. Once discussing the same with a marketing consultant, who has worked for Coca Cola brought to my surprise that 70%-80% of the cost of the drink is spent on marketing the black water and this made me question the actual cost of the drink itself, its quality, etc.

Today when we have the right to choose by weighing the pros and cons of a product, we have lost the right of the same. When I say this I refer to the rigorous marketing techniques adopted by these gigantic brand houses which perpetuate our subconscious and play with the psychological response of a human mind by bombarding information and succeeding in meeting their targets and making huge profits by the end of every financial year, vouching for getting a hold of more consumers next year. Profits aren't a problem, but selling a product by exaggerating about it is. At the same time, a consumer is demanding to be educated. Traditional forms of marketing have been never much of a problem.

Billboards were put up to pull customers, but they were there at a distance and not right into our faces. With the evolution of technology, advertisements have started acting as fillers to the processing time of anything. Mails are flooded with tons of spam mails on things once checked out randomly on the internet or maybe an SMS from institutes one has never heard of (thanks to the money people get from selling our database to such institutes.) and you see an H&M advertisement while swiping stories and posts on Instagram and Facebook.

Digital marketers have dominated the space and we are being played every moment. One of my friends shared a very intimidating experience about how she was chatting about a product she had never searched about online, over Facebook and it appeared on her feed. Facebook has faced several accusations of privacy breach issues and is being brought to task.

Publicizing the product is no more the norm, but making the consumer buy it is. Advertisements tend to connect the audience with the product by using emotions, seasoning it with the right music, and with well-renowned influencers. If you go with the lines of traditional logic given by Aristotle, the above would be termed as a fallacious argument to buy a product or service. Concrete reasons are required for the same.

Going by the principle of Marginal Utility, one is required to measure the satisfaction, but satisfaction is equated with money. Money is limited, but things aren't. The complex theory comes handy while making decisions pertaining to spending one's hard-earned money. Detaching a product from the emotional glorification as is done in the advertisements also helps in making wise decisions. The Utilitarian Theory also works sometimes.

All these simple things may apparently be very simple to know but usually are never found to be helpful in practical life, especially, when your subconscious mind is being played with.

Hence, be vigilant.

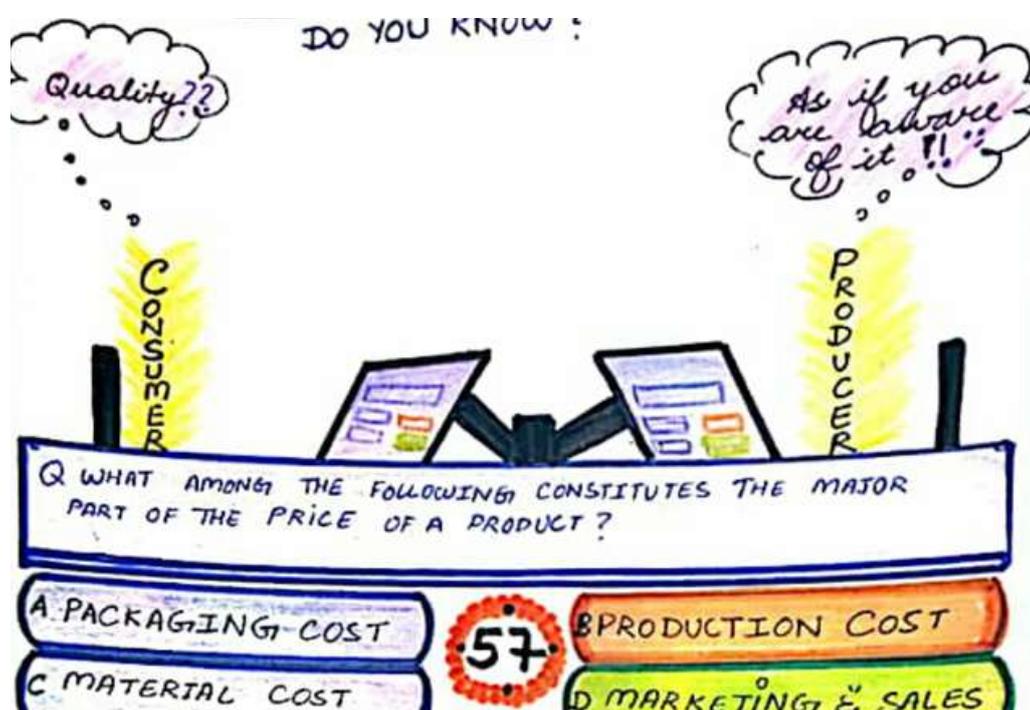


Illustration: Divya Choudhary, B.A. Programme, Second Year



From Brightness To Darkness

Durdanah Masoodi
B.A.(H) Political Science
Second Year

A bright day,
Many dreams,
Come to face,
the market screams.
The present world,
the greedy fellows,
with competitive mates, and struggling desires.
Surrounded is a consumer with too much of "Consumerism",
the early little desires are no more seen.
Family here, boss there,
Response needed everywhere.
Unawareness leads to fall, hence the bright day came to a halt.



Illustration: Bharti Khandelwal, B.A. Programme, Second Year

Is Less Really More?



Krishnendu Pillai
B.A. Programme
First Year

At what point in human history did a human generation deem it okay to have the ability to recognize 500 different product names, but not know how to name our world's continents?

To Marx's disappointment, Industrialization is centred around the use of Capitalist Economic Policies at its heart. As a result of the economic freedom of the time period, these factories produced countless inventions and products on a mass-scale. Before the Industrial Revolution, the goods were created on a small scale, often in people's homes, as Karl Marx would have liked. As a result of this method, goods were often unique in nature and were not produced in large numbers.

The Industrial Revolution fundamentally changed this and instead caused factories to be located in cities and towns, where goods could instead be produced on a mass scale. This abundance of new and cheap goods meant that there were many different and affordable products for people to buy. This led to the growth of consumerism because it created a system in which people could reasonably afford a variety of goods. Furthermore, the wealth accumulated by the business owners of the time period enabled them to afford many more goods and helped intensify the consumerist societies of the time. Because they had higher incomes, they could afford to buy more luxury items and therefore consumed more goods.

Although this led economies to flourish, the gap between the topmost and the bottom layer of the social hierarchy has increased. The solution to exponential economic growth is to give value to the things that truly matter the most in life. This is what came to be known as Minimalism.

The minimalist lifestyle limits the number of material possessions to only those that are truly important in one's life. However, we believe in consumer behaviour where buying is the root of our happiness. If there is an issue, it can be fixed by replacing it with a new product. Consumerism is an empty, temporary solution to our everyday problems. Once we begin to value what truly makes us happy, then we will realize the answer to our life's problems is not continuous growth.

Although owning less can be understood on a personal level. According to Joshua Becker, "our national well-being requires people to buy things they don't need. If minimalism caught on nationally, our economy would be ruined." [1] The minimalist attitude will eventually result in the collapse of the global economy. The consumption of goods and services by individual consumers helps drive the economic engine of a consumerist society. In that, it creates jobs for workers and wealth for business owners. Although minimalism has been seen as the solution to consumerism, it is instead a tool to destroy the economy.

The meaning of the term consumerism has substantially evolved from being a positive word about consumer practises to a negative word, meaning excessive materialism and waste. It can be agreed upon as an increasing concern; but it is not bigger than minimalism, which in the long run tends to erode the economy. Limiting the number of material possessions of individuals will result in low industrial production and income, which is incompatible with our country’s development plans.

Consumerism is indeed inevitable for the survival and flourishing of a nation. However, there could be steps taken to keep a check on increasing materialism.

We work for more hours than before and earn incomes higher than what used to earn. Perhaps it’s time we start giving away more than ever, as well as mitigating our money-oriented behaviour, and revoking the cultural values that we have been known for over centuries. Although consumerism should not be considered as something we need to get rid of, it certainly requires direction. Perhaps efforts could also be made to undo what time has done to the meaning of consumerism.

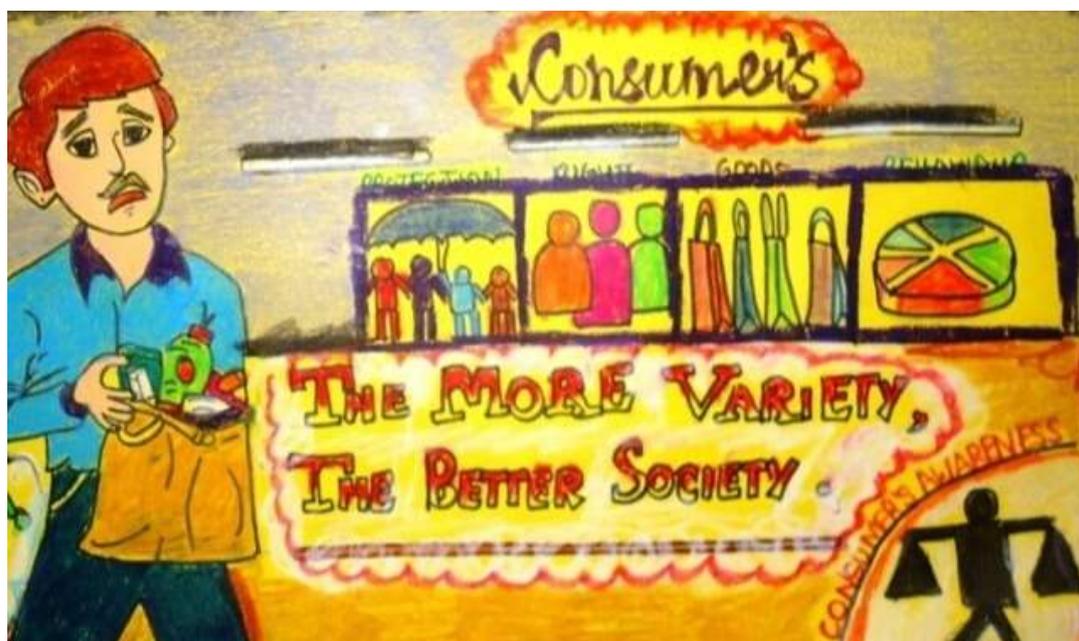


Illustration: Anisha, B.A. Programme, Second Year

[1] Becker, Joshua. “A New Minimalist Economy.” [becomingminimalist.com](https://www.becomingminimalist.com/minimalist-economy/comment-page-1/). <https://www.becomingminimalist.com/minimalist-economy/comment-page-1/> (accessed on January 25, 2020)

CONSUMER CONSCIENCE



Consumerism and Us



Consumerism

Ananya

B.A.(H) Political Science

First Year

Her tear numbed eyes failed to disguise,

The worry on her pallor broke sweat bead jewel upon her forehead

A wary wane smile cracked open on her parched dry lips

She, at demoiselle virgin age of fifteen

Liberated from her scathing clique of half wits

Bravely denying her catastrophic dark veil of ignorance

Refusing venereal pleasure from unknown companion

Chose swords over ornaments and verses over muteness

Sailed her serpentine slender in through the herd

Accepted the accomplishment she always fantasized

She, at demoiselle virgin age of fifteen

Acquired the often denied Education with welcoming arms

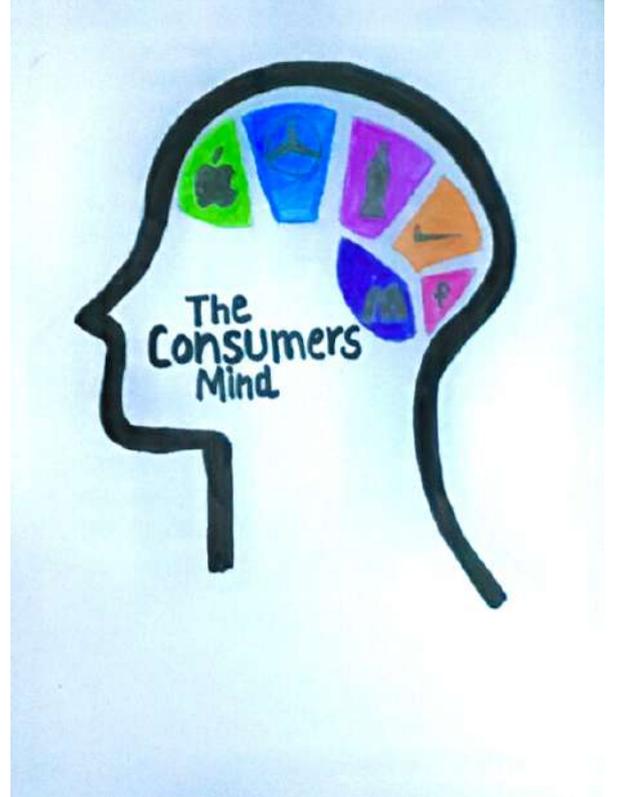


Illustration: Lakshita Gupta, B.A. (H) Sanskrit, Second Year

Aishwarya Sharma
B.A.(H)Philosophy
Second Year

Why is it that the importance of laws comes into light when they affect us, and the rest of the time we choose to remain aloof! Is it because we are not taught to put emphasis on the same? Consumer rights were never discussed with much emphasis in school. It was when I joined Tula, Consumer Club of Miranda House, that I was educated about the various rights I am empowered with. All of which I used to ignore before joining Tula.

In my article, I will bring to light how our syllabus in school ignores consumer laws and the importance of the same. I am sure, not many of us had heard of a discussion regarding consumerism in school until and unless one was a debater. In fact, debates were also consumer-centric on rare occasions. Given this fact, students are not well aware of consumer issues in school. It was only in Class 12 that we had a chapter of 7-8 pages devoted to consumer rights and the redressal procedures in my Business Studies textbook, yet it was considered an insignificant part of the whole syllabus. The Social Sciences and the Physical Sciences on the other hand hardly had a page devoted.

Hence, we can conclude that students in senior secondary schools don't study consumer rights. The argument given for this is that there are other important things to be studied than consumer laws and rights. But aren't we all consumers first? The consumer is the universal class of all categories which binds humans. Why do we ignore such an integral part of our existence, especially in a time when each of us is vulnerable to the rigorous marketing and manipulation in today's profit-driven market?

With the increase in income and ignorance, we fail to acknowledge the unfair pricing of a shopkeeper or the base quality of a product which will find its place in our bins. The education system needs to be reformed to emphasize consumer rights and we need student clubs and societies to bring this issue of consumerism into the limelight. Just like liberty and equality, consumer rights are basic rights. Some of the important factors of consumer protection and consumer rights are as follows: organizes the voice of aggrieved consumers into a systematic procedure, lays standard for products, and increases welfare in society by laying down standards for products.

So, don't choose ignorance, choose to educate yourself and to be more responsible.



Illustration:
Maria Latif,
B.A. (H) Political Science, First Year



Maanya 'Manika' Kamble
B.A.(H) Political Science
Second Year

When Beyonce exclaimed “Who runs the world?!” the cry within every woman’s heart who could understand was almost mechanical. “GIRLS!”. Girls. Women. Females. Bodies. Objects. Slaves. The idea of the Sexual Division of Labour has transcended into the market in a distinct and unprecedented manner. The focus is on women, sure. But not in the way women would like it to be. Not how women would like it to be.

Men and women, alike, are being subjected to many products in the market which makes them feel that they aren’t correct. But they don’t have to worry, because the market got their back. The market is going to make them ‘perfect’. The market has everything that can make them ‘perfect’. However, the deeper narrative here is not only about the market manufacturing the idea of perfection. It’s a much more problematic narrative of the market not only preying on people’s vulnerabilities but also creating them.

In the era of Capitalism, Globalization and Open Market Economies, markets have been central. And for all the players within these markets, advertising and commercialisation have an extremely important role to play. It is a way for them to put across to the world, information and details about their products, and a path for guiding people towards them.

However, in this age, the regimes of Capitalism and Patriarchy seem to have allied, owing to their common agenda of subjugation and subordination, and women emerge as the oppressed. Thus, in this hypocrite world full of paradoxes, a new child was put up in the market; and today that child is a full-grown, hungry, sex-driven, monstrous man, who seems to own his narrative a little too well. When we talk about advertisements, we arrive at a problematic discourse that is two-pronged. The first is the commodification and objectification of women, and secondly the idea of the ‘perfect women’ they create.

Although these ideas are interrelated, it becomes imperative to understand their consequences separately to delve into the deeper question of whether this world that claims to hold its women dear and pushes them to the limit, whether the limit they are being pushed towards is the right one.



What has been observed over the years is the idiosyncratic manner in which companies have been portraying women, their bodies are being used, and their desirability exploited to sell products. Women's bodies are dismembered and are represented in a hypersexualised manner to attract attention to the product. Women's bodies and faces are believed to be instrumental in gathering attention and evoking arousal, and marketers exploit this to transfer that attraction to their products. Thus, markets intertwine the ideas of consumerism of women's bodies and that of their products. And such advertisements only perpetuate the oppression women experience and even take it a step further. Interestingly, this is the oppression both women and men have been fighting against for centuries.

The problem is not only of sexualisation but of trivialisation of how women are exploited. A recent advertisement of a salon trivialising domestic violence, contending "Look good in all you do", showing a distraught woman with a marred face but exceptionally beautiful hair, is quintessential to understand. They tend to 'reinforce' traditional gender roles. A woman working in the office like a boss, asking her male junior to meet his deadline by the following night, going home to cook dinner and calling him asking him to "come back to his wife" is a deep narrative.

Furthermore, the image of women portrayed in these advertisements is something that demands every human being to think. The roles assigned to women- the "supermom", the "good wife", the "mom who looks 20", the "homemaker", the "glue of the family", the "supermodel mom", the "submissive girlfriend", the "sister of a hyper-protective brother"- all these create societal expectations that are not only unrealistic but downright dangerous.

However, the subtlety of this Tartarus is unrecognised. Men and women see in these advertisements an idea of how women should be. Thus, it becomes important to understand here the Theory of Consumerism. An economy to enhance its sales is run by physically manipulating the consumers in a derogatory manner, that they crave more and more consumer goods. This theory also throws light on the sexualisation of women's bodies and how they become targeted consumers, and the beneficiary of this depreciation is the corporate power structure.

The association created between fair skin and success, the idea of clear skin leading to confidence, the idea of skinny jeans and popularity, the idea of '36-24-36' and being interesting for one's male counterpart; these pseudo-narratives that have been popularised by commercials, have been internalised by women. And this is so harmful; mentally, physically and economically: while women voluntarily abandon their beautiful selves and inner 'Wollstonecrafts' to tread a path of misery.

The reason for this can be narrowed down to Freud's Theory of Market Manipulation. He propounded that the purpose of advertisements is to create an unconscious association between products and merchandise and deeply-internalised fears, sexual desires, and the desperation for identity and self-esteem. The producers take advantage of this repertoire to guide people towards their products.

Thus, women end up in a state of unfreedom, in a panopticon, in a state of disharmony between their true selves and ideal selves, and exploit themselves relentlessly. It is time that these 'How-to manuals' in the form of advertisements stop telling people 'how-to' be, and find other ways to thrive. The point of the economy was expansion. But it has ended up contracting people's self-concepts. Thus, the narrative of relatability thrives on life, grit, struggle and taking the road less travelled by, rather than the capitalist manifesto of the one treaded the most.



Illustration: Ibrat Sandhu, B.A. Programme, Second Year

Our Life's Purpose: Happy or Better?



Krishnendu Pillai
B.A. Programme
First Year

Doing what makes you happy has often come across as the counterargument to increasing consumerism. This concept aims at enhancing internal satisfaction, rather than increasing materialistic possessions. Although it is a good long term plan, it is not something to be followed for your daily life. According to Jocko Willink, a former Navy SEAL and author, “if you do what makes you happy right now, it will not necessarily make you happy in the long run. So yes, find a job that is going to make you happy but for today, do what doesn't make you happy. Do what makes you stronger, what pushes you to test your limits, what eventually makes you better.

”What about happiness, though? We need happiness to be better in life too.

According to Trent Hamm, “happiness is the flower that grows from a well-cultivated garden of life.”

The effort one puts into the cultivation of their life results in happiness blooming up naturally. What I have learned over the years is that happiness is not a constant state. There will be moments of sadness, the ones where we really feel weak. But this only enhances the happiness that we experience after that phase.[1]



Illustration: Ashima, B.A. Programme , Second Year

When we try to stuff life with all the things that make us happy, perhaps trying to increase materialistic happiness, we might start perceiving ordinary things as dull. This is where we differentiate between pleasure that brings in momentary joy, that tends to fade away quickly; and the sources that bring in permanent happiness. Although the second is the obvious mantra to be followed for life, it requires us to work on the cultivation of life. We are far better off investing our days in cultivating our garden for an array of perennial flowers than going to the flower shop to buy a cut flower.

Spend the heart of your day doing what makes you better. Do that day in and day out, and life becomes better.

[1] Hamm, Trent. “Do What Makes You Happy? Or Do What Makes You Better.” [thesimpledollar.com](https://www.thesimpledollar.com/financial-wellness/do-what-makes-you-happy-or-do-what-makes-you-better/).
<https://www.thesimpledollar.com/financial-wellness/do-what-makes-you-happy-or-do-what-makes-you-better/> (accessed on January 26, 2020)

Addiction to Online Shopping and Ignorance of Rights



Jahnavi Chourasia
B.A.(H) Political Science
First Year

The new technological revolution has brought up many changes, particularly the internet which has become the inseparable part of our lives. To add on to this, the opening of the economy has made it possible for different companies to venture in Indian markets. Though this has offered people much more choices in respect to brands and products, all these developments have created a new avenue of consumer rights violation through online shopping.

With the advent of digitalization and smartphones, online shopping is much more convenient with our favourite brands just one click away but in recent times it has posed new challenges with respect to consumer rights. Issues like duplicate products, lack of choices in payment and their safety, delivery issues, return and refund policy, lack of proper information have shown another side of online shopping culture and in a way that consumers have got cheated when they are outside their homes in 'real' shops also.

The problem of online shopping with consumer rights is much more severe than 'traditional' shopping and there is a vast ignorance and lack of awareness among people. The fact that you're not buying from an 'actual' person rather than from a website makes some consumers think that their problems cannot be resolved.

Online shopping is a recent phenomenon and hence there's a genuine lack of information about it and the issues that concern people as consumers. These issues can only be tackled when consumers are aware of the various mechanisms to seek redressal and that is called the very 'first step'. Online shopping is convenient through smartphones but to enjoy it truly, the need is to be 'smart' consumers!



Illustration:
Anisha,
B.A. Programme,
Second Year



**LIGHTS
CAMERA
ADVERTISE**

Led or Misled?

Saumya Tyagi
B.Sc.(H) Chemistry
Second Year

Have you ever seen a Lays advertisement wherein the Lays packet is brimming with crispy, salty, and spicy chips? Fascinated by the colours and flavours you just cannot stop your salivating self from paying a visit to the nearby local shop, spend your precious money on them only to discover that $\frac{3}{4}$ th of packet's volume is comfortably occupied by the nitrogen gas molecules and only a tiny quarter by the chips population? Have you ever been through this comically disturbing experience? Yes, of course, you've been!

This is called 'disappointment via misleading advertisements syndrome' (the ever famished me simply cannot be deterred from purchasing a Lays every third day). This is just one example. If your fingers skim over the remote control and scroll through multiple channels, you'll come across abundant examples of what's called 'misleading advertisements' with bogus visuals and hollow claims.



Illustration: Ibrat Sandhu, B.A. Programme , Second Year

Let's hear the tale of 'detergents'. Walk into a local store, scan the aisles for washing powders. Grab any one of them. Pour a chunk of it in a water-filled bucket. Dip your shirt in this 'wonder liquid' for as many hours and minutes as you may like. Rub the dirty collars vigorously. The result - the collar of your shirt will never be as pearly white as the woman in fancy saree on your television screen shows it to be. Guess what? The 'wonder liquid' appears miraculous only through television screens. (My mother has refused to wash my dirty white clothes. "Ask the lady in commercials to do it. She has a way with the detergents", she says, winking)

Next in the queue are beauty products. The velvety-soft, flawless skin, silky hair, dusky to pale complexion transition, just a few of the shallow promises beauty product advertisements scream at the top of their lungs. Allow me to quote my mother here, "If there is an ounce of honesty in their words then why can't their creams and lotions turn a buffalo from black to alabaster?". Using bucks after bucks on such deceiving beauty products is not the way to go. Advertisements are meant to lure the audience. They are the tempting sweet honey which the bee inside us craves for. Yet, simply put:

Your Smart Brain + Past Experience As a Consumer = A Better Future Decision.

Case study: How have ‘Surf Excel’ Advertisements Changed Over the Past 10 Years?



Rakshita Kaushik
B.A.(H)Philosophy
Second Year

Marketing and advertising play a huge role in shaping our society - the way we see, think, understand, and act. The advertisements that we constantly see paint a picture of society, thus shaping how we view ourselves. Advertisements have a very major impact on society, both moral and social. Even more profound than influencing our consumption behaviour, advertising can shape our aspirations.

The advertising industry has come a long way over the past century. Initially, things were simple and straightforward; advertisements told us about products and their features. But as the world evolved, so did the competition. Moreover, more than just being able to sell the product, advertisements now, try to make people believe that their product is better than all the other products available in the market. To stand out, advertisers had to adjust their focus from ‘what’ to ‘why.’ Crafting stories behind their goods to connect on an emotional level with the viewers, it became all about how the product makes people feel.

One of India’s most admired companies is Hindustan Unilever and its detergent brand - Surf Excel- the brand which is touted to have revolutionized the detergent category with its distinct positioning. Even after 59 years of its existence, Surf Excel remains true to its brand philosophy and is currently marketed as the counterpart brand of OMO detergent in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka markets. First introduced in neighbouring Pakistan just after a year of independence in 1948 by Unilever; Surf was brought to India in 1959. Believed to be one of the oldest detergents, it was launched to become the one-stop-shop for people seeking solutions for laundry issues. (Mr Sabeen Fazli (Marketing Manager) Unilever Main Head, Karachi). However, there has been a major change since the time Surf Excel was brought to India, to how it is presented as a complete brand in the market today.

The advertising of this detergent has evolved heavily in the past few years. Initially, it was simply presented as a quality detergent which featured Lalita Ji in one of the oldest ads of Surf. Soon after, India witnessed a tough detergent war with the arrival of Nirma in 1969. An answer to Nirma’s cheap pricing, Surf Excel's Lalita Ji stood for value of money and became a household name thereafter. Standing strong against Nirma’s Hema, Rekha, Jaya, and Sushma – Surf Excel’s Lalita Ji cultivated the definition of ‘sasti aur achi cheez’ (Cheap and best) for consumers.



The 'Daag Ache Hain' (Stains are good) Phenomenon

In the late 90s, Surf Excel went with the tagline 'Jaise Bhi Daag Ho, Surf Excel Hai na'. It was only in 2005 when the brand managed to break through the clutter introducing 'Daag Ache Hain'. With this, Surf Excel targeted housewives, especially with kids, and catered to the urban audiences. Surf Excel had a clear lead in that sense, with its creative partners' unspooling iconic campaign after campaign. Perhaps, it is the only detergent brand to go ahead and say that "Daag acche hain" (Stains are good)

The 'Dirt is Good' campaign began with the famous puddle war commercial, where a brother is shown taking revenge on a mud pool for spoiling his little sister's clothes. The advertisement continued with a series of stories of children getting dirty while doing something good, hence dirt is good. The success of a product finally depends on the product being good. But communication can also affect the sale of a product to a great extent. Communication needs to be simplistic to be effective. Since all the surf excel ads were very simple in terms of their manner of conveying the message, these ads were able to make a good impact on people and were effective enough.

Over the years, the brand has launched several extensions to keep up with the market's changing expectations. Forty years after Lalita ji first came to life on the television screens, the brand's range now includes soap bars, liquid detergents, top-load, and front-load detergent powders. (Surf excel. September 29, 2014) Several commercials helped the brand build high salience amongst the target audience and was followed by equally interesting executions over the years. The consistency and distinctiveness of the campaign led to strong growth for the brand. Amidst the mainline communication through Television, Radio, Outdoor, and Print, it was 'Storytelling' in regional languages that made Surf Excel a versatile brand and a favourite. Surf Excel has always been known for its heart-warming advertisements. Promoting itself as a better option than its competitors, Surf Excel marched ahead, standing for righteousness and human qualities to possess but did not let the kid in it go away. Following PM Narendra Modi's Swachh Bharat Initiative, Surf Excel took on itself to put the spotlight on the matter of environment cleanliness with 'Surf Excel Keep India Clean Watch'. Here again, it attracted a lot of attention to promote cleanliness.

For a brand to keep the communication going for decades, it is always a challenge to come up with a fresh twist in its advertising. Surf Excel understood this and launched 'Haar Ko Harao' under 'Dirt Is Good'. Here the ads preached parents that if kids get dirty in learning to defeat failure, then dirt is good. When advertising focuses on empowerment and accepting groups that are less relatable or less accepted, there is both greater risk and greater reward. When brands paint an inclusive picture of society, they play a role in redefining what is considered mainstream, sparking national conversations, and sometimes a lot of backlashes too. The brand recently tried to do something similar with its latest Holi special 'Rang Laaye Sang' (colours that brings us together) campaign. Under this campaign, the brand released an advertisement centred around the theme of Hindu-Muslim unity and instantly faced a lot of criticism for the concept.

The one-minute-long ad features a young Hindu girl, dressed in a white T-shirt, who chooses to get stained in Holi colours to protect her young Muslim friend who has to go to the nearby mosque to pray. The advertisement ends with its classic tagline, 'Agar kuch achha karne mein daag lag jaaye toh daag achhe hain' (Stains that come as a part of a good deed are good stains). (March 2019 Indian Journal of Marketing) With the advertisement, Hindustan Unilever tries promoting religious harmony and bringing people together with the power of colours.

However, people did not take the advertisement positively and criticized it for showing that Namaaz is more important than Holi. The campaign has faced criticisms by people who feel that the ad is 'Hindu phobic' and controversial. Twitter is filled with tweets criticizing the ad with the hashtag #boycottSurfexcel. Besides, the issue of a Hindu girl 'protecting' a Muslim boy from indirect Holi hooliganism was also not taken lightly, with some extreme commentators mentioning 'love jihad.' On the contrary, some people have appreciated the advertisement and have liked the concept of promoting unity and harmony among all religions.

Thus, Surf Excel has created a space for itself in the market. From the plain vanilla Surf to Surf Excel and its distinct variants, the brand has traversed through like a true player with an undying spirit in the Rs.13000 crore detergent industry. Hence, the way a product is marketed and promoted has a lot of impacts. Indian society belongs to the Television age that loves to just sit and watch all sorts of things on television. Research has shown that immense profit has been recorded by most companies who have invested hugely in advertising. Henceforth, advertising plays a very important role for both, the consumers as well as the profit-makers.



Illustration:
Pooja Goel,
B.A. Programme,
First Year

[1] "Surf Excel," October 1, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surf_Excel.

[2] Gupte, Masoom. "40 Years Ago...and Now: Unsmiling Lalita Ji to Celebrating Stains." Business Standard. Business-Standard, August 27, 2014. https://www.business-standard.com/article/management/40-years-ago-and-now-unsmiling-lalita-ji-to-celebrating-stains-114082701206_1.html.

[3] Youtube.com

How Advertising Impacts Purchasing Decisions Of Consumers



Supriya Bhandari
B.A.(H) Economics
Second Year

Advertisements help bridge the gap between the producers and the consumers by giving the producers a platform to showcase their products. They target consumers from various social groups and try to hand stitch an advertisement that best suits them.

The Ad agencies target the economic, social and psychological aspects of humans since that is what they relate best to. In today's dynamic world, the way to personal happiness, going by the Consumerist ideology, is through purchasing material possessions and consumption in excess of one's need.

Exposure to advertisements affects consumer's cognitive system, for example, the memory of the ad and the brand leads to attitudes such as product liking and an impulse to purchase it. Using emotion as a tool in advertisements is a huge bonus as such ads resonate well with the consumers. A perfect example of such an advertisement is the Havells wire advertisement wherein a little boy observes his mom cooking chapatis and in the process, she hurts her hands. Seeing this, the boy folds a piece of wire into tongs that help his mother cook further without burning her hands, bringing tears in her eyes. Such advertisements can have a lasting effect on the consumer, inclining him or her to choose a certain product over others.

The members of the lower-income group are more inclined towards the price of the product, whereas the members of a higher income group are more inclined towards the quality, features, etc. of the product. A very good example of such distinction is that of Apple and Xiaomi. Apple sells its products at nearly 10 times the prices of Xiaomi products. Since both brands target different groups, both are successful in the Indian market.

Advertisements exploit the consumer's needs to keep up with the trends of the current consumer market due to social pressure. iPhone is the perfect example.

Advertisements from various companies on a similar product give rise to competition and provide for the consumer to utilise what he or she might feel is the best in terms of utility for them. This also leads to the launching of products of a similar line that caters to people of different age groups and thus, no one is left behind. Cosmetics, technologies, appliances, etc, Most product genres fall into this category.

Brands and companies, along with ad agencies, take into account the cultural factors involving the populace, that is the target for a particular product, which in turn induces their adoption of marketing strategies. This helps them manage the expectations and habits of the population being targeted. For example, McDonald's converted the big mac to the maharaja mac as its Indian rendition.

Brands constantly reinforce a need in the consumer's mind so that he develops a purchasing need and motivation.¹ They make him or her feel that what they equip currently is lacking in more than one aspect, and leads them to think in a way that suggests that buying that particular product will lead to ultimate satisfaction.

In this way, advertisements are able to grab the attention of the consumers which in turn build their perception and belief towards the brand and its product. If perception and belief are positive, the consumer will certainly adopt the product.



Illustration: Anisha, B.A. Programme, Second Year

[1] "How Advertising Impacts Consumer Purchase Decision Making." 23 Aug. 2016, <https://medium.com/@BrandBerryMarcom/how-advertising-impacts-consumer-purchase-decision-making-62415d283d53>.

Case Study: Coca Cola



Mansi Sharma

B.A.(H) Political Science

Second Year

‘Things go better with Coke’, ‘open happiness’, ‘good things come in fours’ and ‘can’t beat the real things’ are some of the prominent jingles and taglines of the very famous aerated drink i.e. Coca-cola. The history of Coca-cola is very ancient and traces back to 1886 owing to the curiosity of Dr John S. Pemberton when he invented a distinctive tasteful soft drink which he made to be sold at soda functions. He took this flavoured syrup to a nearby pharmacy and mixed it with carbonated water. His partner Frank M Robinson was given credit for naming this beverage as “Coca-cola”. There is an amazing fact about the first servings of Coca-cola. It was sold for five cents per glass. Today, its daily servings are estimated at \$1.9 billion globally.

Coca-cola is a soft-carbonated drink. It is being sold in stores, restaurants, bars and vending machines internationally. It was produced by Coca-cola Company in Atlanta, Georgia and it has been often referred to simply as Coke and cola or in some parts of US as soda. The coca-cola company has also introduced other cola drinks under the cola brand name for various occasions. The most common one is Diet Coke with others including Caffeine-free coca-cola, Vanilla and special editions with lemon, lime or coffee. It has an American beverage association. The Coca-Cola Bottler’s Association (CCBA) is a trade association that offers product insurance, employee group panning, resource training and consulting services.

The advertisement for Coca-cola underwent many significant changes over the centuries. The first advertisement was a print ad. It was published in the Atlanta Journal by founder member, John Pemberton in 1886. He advertised his product as delicious, refreshing, exhilarating, and invigorating. He called it an Intellectual beverage and temperance drink. It contained the toxic elements and various properties of the coca plant. His drink claimed to cure nervous infections such as headaches, hysteria, etc. In 1882, ‘Increase trade at your soda fountain by selling Coca-cola’ was mentioned on Coca-cola pamphlets. In 1893, the catchy slogan was- Delicious, refreshing, the brain and nerve drink, cures headache. Hence, targeting health concerns and tempting consumers to drink. In the latter half of the 1880s i.e. in 1894, it again used words like refreshing and exhilarating to catch the attention of consumers. During the 1890s Coca-cola was called the ideal brain tonic.

At the beginning of the 1900s, it was pictured with a girl named Hilda Clark. She was chosen because of her appealing personality to attract consumers by holding a cup of drink. This advertisement targeted health problems and by consuming it, the person might get rid of all difficulties like headaches, mental and physical exhaustion. In the later years of the Coca-cola brand, around 1979, the advertisers depicted a football player: Mean Joe Greene to flourish and prosper in the advertising industry. In this, a common boy shared a Coke with Greene and he gave his jersey to this fellow. To cater to the needs of consumers who wished to consume low calories beverages, Diet coke was made. This was the first time when the extension of Coca-cola happened.

It flourished in US markets in 1982. A campaign was launched in 2011 in Australia for taking this aerated drink to greater heights. Therefore, various common names were added to its packaging. This campaign was taken forward in the US too in 2014.

Slogans play a very vital role in the advertisement industry to catch the consumer’s attention. This drink has produced some great ones throughout 130 years. In the mid-1890s the Coca-cola company hired Massengale advertising of Atlanta. They produced very elegant advertisements for the company featuring slogans like, ‘Coca-cola is a delicious beverage’, ‘Delightfully in harmony with the spirit of all Outings’, ‘The great national temperance drink’, or ‘Coca-cola revives and sustains.’ There was a change in advertising this drink after World war II when music and sung jingles played an increasingly important role in various campaigns giving a complete change to grow and to gain popularity. Slogans became shorter to fit into a catchy melody. Modern radio and television played a necessary role for coca-cola to prosper in getting the maximum reach of people. These advertisements have been very different from all other ads. Forecasted on televisions in terms of revolving around a storyline which has been always catchy and appealing.

Today, advertisements are not about how they are featured rather than focusing on the way of depiction. In contemporary times, Coca-cola is sponsoring the Indian Premier League taking place every year in April –May. A very famous song got featured in ‘Lukka Chuppi’, a Bollywood movie starring Kriti Sanon and Kartik Aaryan called Coca-cola. This song got millions of views on Youtube. Fantastic, colourful and wholesome are some of the words that best describe Coca Cola.

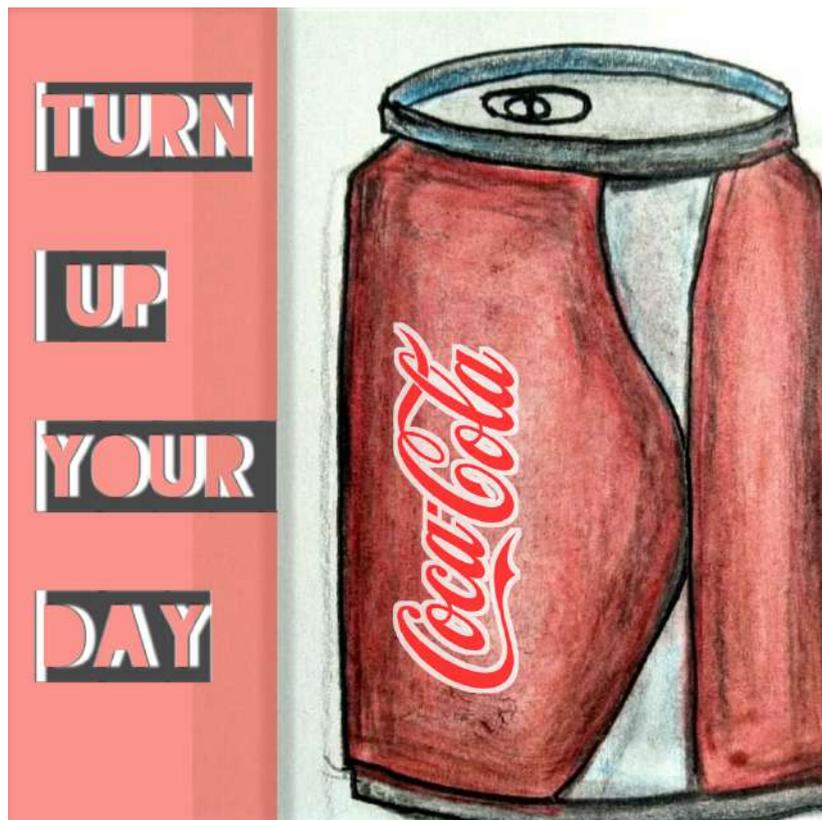


Illustration: Prerna , B.A. (H) Philosophy , Second Year

[1] Ted Ryan, “Coca-Cola slogans through year,”Coca Cola Australia, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/au/news/coca-cola-slogans-through-the-years> , April 28, 2019



Dr Bijayalaxmi Nanda, Principal, addressing TULA gathering



TULA Students' Union with Faculty Advisors



Vyshnavi Pulluru, President of TULA, at the orientation for the fresh batch



Interactive Session



Registration Desk



Dr Jayashree Pillai, Convenor of TULA, addressing students during the Annual Workshop



Dr. Isheet Rutabhasini discussing Misleading Advertisements

Ms. Priyanka Kochchar interacting with students on Sustainability at home



Excerpts from one of the enlightening sessions



Ms Shruti Sharma and Dr Hena Singh, Faculty Advisors, judging the poetry competition



Students and Faculty at the Annual Workshop



Celebrating Independence Day



Award Distribution Ceremony



Roadshow organized during the Annual Workshop



Nukkad Natak



Flash Mob



TULA Students' Union with Faculty Advisors



Rajit Punhani, Chief Vigilance Officer, NTPC, Keynote speaker on VAW celebration



Ms. Sana discussing Intellectual Property Rights



Students and Faculty at VAW event



Enthusiastic gathering at TULA event



Photography by: Lakshita Gupta

The background features three large, stylized green leaves of varying sizes and orientations, creating a natural, eco-friendly aesthetic. The leaves are rendered in a solid, muted green color.

GO GREEN!

**Ethical Consumerism and
Green Consumption**

To Buy Or Not To Buy, That Is The Question

Exploring Ethical Consumerism and Labelling Standards



Surmayi Khatana
B.A.(H) Political Science
Second Year

The world is consistently seeing a rise in ethical consumerism. People are taking an increasing interest in the products they invest in, and in turn what they endorse. Ethical consumerism is made up of consumers who are conscious of the environmental, both macro and micro, as well as the political impacts of their purchases. Therefore, being an ethical consumer includes consuming products that are ethically produced, and which are not detrimental to the environment. It can be as simple as buying organically produced foods or as complex as boycotting goods produced in sweatshops.

Take for instance the uproar against Fast Fashion in the case of H&M [1] wherein the sustainability of their products as well the unethical nature of the areas of production comes into focus. 'Ethical' products include, but are not limited to- renewable energy, organic produce, vegan or non-animal tested goods, fair trade goods, recyclable materials, etc.

With a rise in ethical consumerism comes an increasing relevance of pressure groups that highlight the unethical practices of companies. Numerous websites, as well as Journals and Magazines, highlight ethically sourced alternatives and details. Yet, deliberating upon what to buy and what not to buy can be a complicated task.

Labels become an essential part of this endeavour of ensuring that one's consumption remains ethical. Product Labels with details such as contents, directions of use, expiry date, etc., were made to ensure that consumers have all the information needed while buying a product and that the companies do not hide any constituents.

This is imperative for issues such as allergies, adequate usage, etc. Labelling schemes can be seen as an extended practical step aimed at making ethical products visible to the people. They hence become an important part in the development of ethical markets.

In India, we currently have a few of such labels, introduced by agencies such as Bureau of Indian Standards and The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, which include:



- The Energy Efficiency label by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency describes energy efficiency, not only in terms of cost-saving potential but also the amount of energy an appliance saves. The Power Savings Guide further provides consumers with the necessary information.
- The Eco Mark, issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), is for ecologically safe products. These products are made, used, and disposed of in a manner that significantly reduces the harms caused to the environment. Currently, it is being issued for categories such as food, pharmaceuticals, electronic appliances, packing materials, etc. The aim has been to encourage consumers to buy more eco-friendly products and incentivize manufacturers to use eco-friendly packaging materials.
- Another symbol, 'Craft Mark' highlights the Indian handicrafts that achieve a specific standard and labelling norm. Buying these handmade products helps the lives of local craftspeople.
- Leaping Bunny, the symbol of vegan products or 'non-animal tested' goods, especially in cosmetics. The Leaping Bunny is an internationally-recognised symbol.
- Jaivik Bharat symbol distinguishes organic products, specifically organic produce from India. It ensures that the term 'organic' is not just used as a buzzword but is instead truly a reflection of the standard of the product.

Given these labels, a clearer picture of the nature of a product is given directly to the customers. A study in the United Kingdom (Humanising Business through Ethical Labelling: Progress and Paradoxes in the UK) [2] which studied the ethics of labelling by analysing the various environmental, social, animal-welfare based labels, confirmed that the functions of labelling go beyond just communicating to the consumer what the product is. Labelling initiatives have also been founded to provide a platform for interaction, 'political' dialogue, on how to 'do' sustainability in their industry. Creating space for a much-needed discourse.

Yet, on the other hand, a study (Consumers' Attitudes Toward Labelling of Ethical Products: The Case of Organic and Fair Trade Products) [3] based in Italy suggests that although information of the product may incite purchases of Fair Trade products, it does not signify that the claims tell a complete story to the consumer. It further does not ensure that the consumer is made aware of 'lived experiences' at the end of the factory line-up just by a label. Furthermore, some studies suggest that consumers don't entirely trust the labels' claims in the first place. Here, a need for active discussion as well as the inclusion of these labels becomes imperative.

In conclusion, although the conundrum of ‘to buy or not buy’ constantly lingers whenever one weighs a choice in product, it is important to consistently engage with this dilemma. More that the people interact with this issue, more relevant labels will emerge, helping consumers identify exactly what they wish to invest in. Further, it would ensure the incentivisation of companies to indulge in more ethical practices.

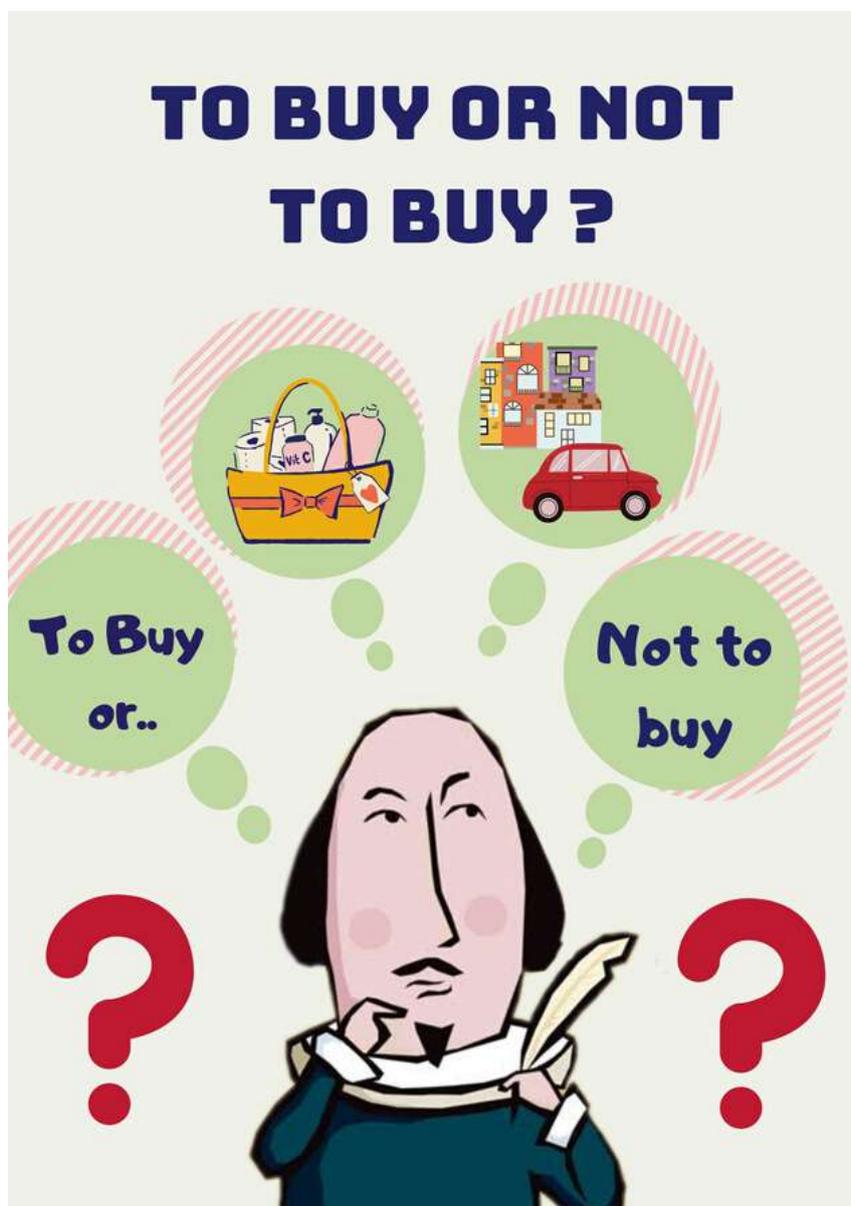


Illustration: Sajneet Kaur , B.A. Programme, First Year

[1] Chua, Jasmin Malik. “The Environment and Economy Are Paying the Price for Fast Fashion - but There's Hope.” Vox. Vox, September 12, 2019. <https://www.vox.com/2019/9/12/20860620/fast-fashion-zara-hm-forever-21-boohoo-environment-cost>.

[2] Hartlieb, Susanne, and Bryn Jones. "Humanising Business through Ethical Labelling: Progress and Paradoxes in the UK." Journal of Business Ethics 88, no. 3 (2009): 583-600. Accessed February 10, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40295020.

[3] Annunziata, Azzurra & Ianuario, Sara & Pascale, Paola. (2011). Consumers' Attitudes Toward Labelling of Ethical Products: The Case of Organic and Fair Trade Products. Journal of Food Products Marketing. 17. 518-535. 10.1080/10454446.2011.618790.

Greenwashing: Pseudo Protection Of Environment



Ashima

B.A. Programme

Second Year

Have you ever heard about garment collection programs by fast fashion brands which are popping up in India like H&M? The objective is simple – you give your old clothes to H&M and they will recycle the clothes that no longer can be reused. In return, you will get a voucher for every bag you drop. Indirectly helping you get over the guilt of killing the planet. A win-win situation, right? But there's something behind the curtain. H&M's and other companies' entire scheme of providing this feel-good environmental friendly image to their brand is a clear case of greenwashing.

Greenwashing is a marketing strategy to make consumers presume that a company's product is environmentally sound. Notice when you buy a typical '100% natural', 'eco-friendly' and 'organic' cosmetic product, it never has above-listed tags in the composition label. These brands make sure to let you know that they are not the ones responsible for environmental degradation. Thus, they are essentially providing misleading information. You might think, "What if these companies genuinely make sure that their products are sustainable?"

Every firm wants to reduce costs and increase profits. Making products environmentally sound requires investment, and if the objective of increase in demand for eco-friendly goods can be met by merely sticking a '100% eco-friendly' sticker with green packaging then what would they have to lose? Moreover, by printing the same, they charge extra from the consumer in the name of sustainability, which is ethically wrong.

Now, what's the solution to brands like H&M and their supposedly green 'Garment Collection Program'? The problem is not their scheme, but the brand itself, and that too one as big as this. Let us take the example of Unilever for further clarification. They make everything you use today and claim their products to be eco-friendly. Scholar Daphne DuPont-Nivet, in her report, writes that Unilever's so-called sustainable, RSPO certified oil has been produced on illegally cleared land, involving the employment of child labour. Moreover, Unilever is responsible for heavy environmental degradation in India, though they may be doing a lot more for the environment than their peers.[1]

An organization's success depends on how ethically integrated their organizational structure is. An ethical firm can build trust and loyalty among its stakeholders. Yet, instead of focusing on long term sustainability, the firms choose profits over ethics. . Thus, even the largest firms indulge in deceitful practices like greenwashing.

The analysis of descriptive statistics yields some interesting results. The average greenwashing score was found to be highest in the Personal Care sector (62%) and lowest in the Electronics sector (52%). Examples include LG, Oriflame, Kellogg, Heinz, Nissan, etc.[2]

What should we do then? Would making small, personal changes and living simply save the planet? Yes, but to a small extent. One needs to be more rational while making decisions. We need to know that personal emissions do not account for much and that the world's top 100 companies are responsible for 71% of Global Emissions.

What we need are drastic, almost never seen before changes in our consumption and economic models.

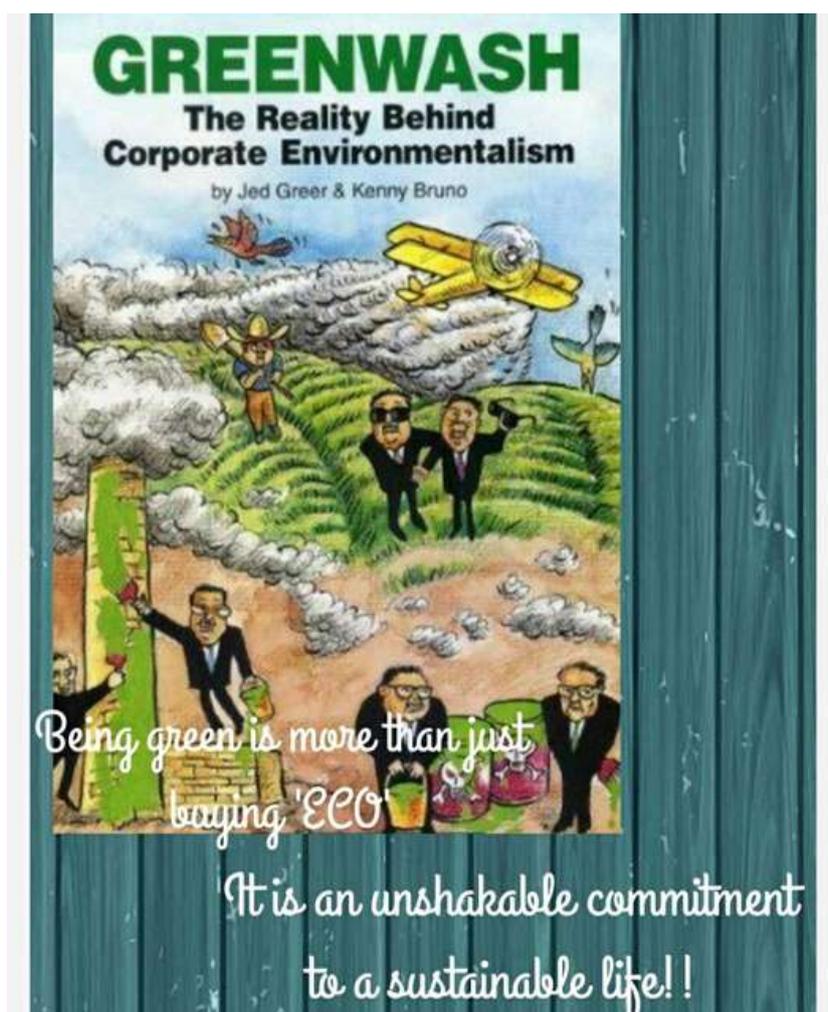


Illustration: Apoorvi Bajpai, B.A. Programme, First Year

[1] Dupont-Nivet, Daphné. “Inside Unilever's Sustainability Myth.” *New Internationalist*, December 21, 2017. <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2017/04/13/inside-unilever-sustainability-myth>.

[2] Aggarwal, Priyanka, and Aarti Kadyan. “Greenwashing: The Darker Side Of CSR.” *Indian Journal of Applied Research* 4, no. 3 (2011): 61–66. <https://doi.org/10.15373/2249555x/mar2014/20>.



Kura Sunaina
B.A. Programme
Second Year

What is the latest fashion in the clothing industry? We think of our dressing style on a daily basis. The thoughts that come into one's mind are - if one's outfit is trendy, fashionable, and if it is going with today's market. But, is it really necessary for us to look into all of it? Does it even matter if we do not follow the fashion industry's norms and the ever-changing ideas?

The fashion cycle or the fashion life cycle has three stages - The introduction stage, acceptance stage, and regression stage. Fashion is classified into Fads, Fast Fashion, Moderate Fashion and Classics; based on the lasting period of the above stages. The Fads are the shortest-lived, which become popular and quickly disappear, making no great impact on the populace. Fast fashion, on the other hand, though short-lived, has a great impact on the population. The fashion becomes popular and lasts longer though not that commendable. Moderate fashion is usually cyclic and comes and goes out of fashion, but does not die like the previous two. The classics are the everlasting and do not die or run out of the fashion industry.

The world today enjoys fast fashion to the greatest extent in the market compared to the other fashion cycles. Fast fashion is a new term used to describe clothing collections based on the most recent trends. Complemented with the internet, technological innovation, and globalization, the up-dated fashion becomes rapid and then turns to form a new market and field, different from the conventional fashion market.[1]

Fast fashion markets are encouraged because of the cheap clothing, their ability to fulfil consumer demands, ability to dominate, and ability of the firms to produce trendy and quality clothing in a short span of time and up-date the fashion on a weekly or monthly basis. Fast fashion brands like Inditex Zara and H&M (Hennes & Mauritz) renew their shelves weekly or fortnightly catering to the fashion trends of the day. Not only do they satisfy their customers, but they also provide the latest fashion at cheap prices. A customer is usually attracted to these shops because of the up-dated stock and cheap prices.

Inditex Zara, and H&M provide goods according to the requirement of the populace, unlike brands like Levis and Calvin Klein that renew their stock once in six months and do not go with the trend. They also do not provide the latest trends. These brands are pricey when compared to the former brands. Inditex Zara and H&M aim to provide products in a democratized manner, making them available to all. But, in the process, not only are brands like Levis and Calvin Klein reconsidering their functioning in the market, but also fast fashion is affecting our planet tremendously.

An average consumer bought sixty percent more clothes in 2014 than in 2000 but kept the garment for half as long. People no longer buy a pair of clothes and use it for years to come rather they buy more than a pair of clothes in a month and use them once. The present fashion changes at a frequency of fifty-two seasons, unlike the traditional five-season fashion. The production and the disposal of clothing in the era of fast fashion have economic, environmental, and societal impacts that need immediate attention.

According to the Ellen McArthur Foundation, clothing production has approximately doubled in the decade, driven by the middle-class population across the globe and increased per capita sales in developed economies. An expected 400 percent increase in world GDP by 2050 will mean an even greater demand for clothing.[2] The annual value of clothing discarded prematurely is \$400 billion.

Coming to the environmental impacts of fast fashion, they are diverse, such as damaging rivers in developing countries where manufacturing units are set up to the 200 years retaining the ability of non-biodegradable clothing. Making a pair of jeans produces greenhouse gases equivalent to driving a car for 80 miles. A cotton shirt uses 2700 liters of water in manufacturing, that is water required by a human to drink in 2.5 years. Growing the cotton to making the jacket uses around 10,300 liters of water, which is equivalent to 24 years of drinking water for one person. This is a huge amount of water, but when we look at synthetic fibers, the figures of oil used in their manufacturing are even worse. They use almost 342 million barrels of oil every year. The manufacturing units located in the developing third world nations have a great impact on the environment in these places like the Citarum River in Indonesia, which is one of the most polluted rivers in the world. The people living around this river have serious health issues. Not only manufacturing, but discarding also has a great impact on the environment. The discarded clothing from the developed

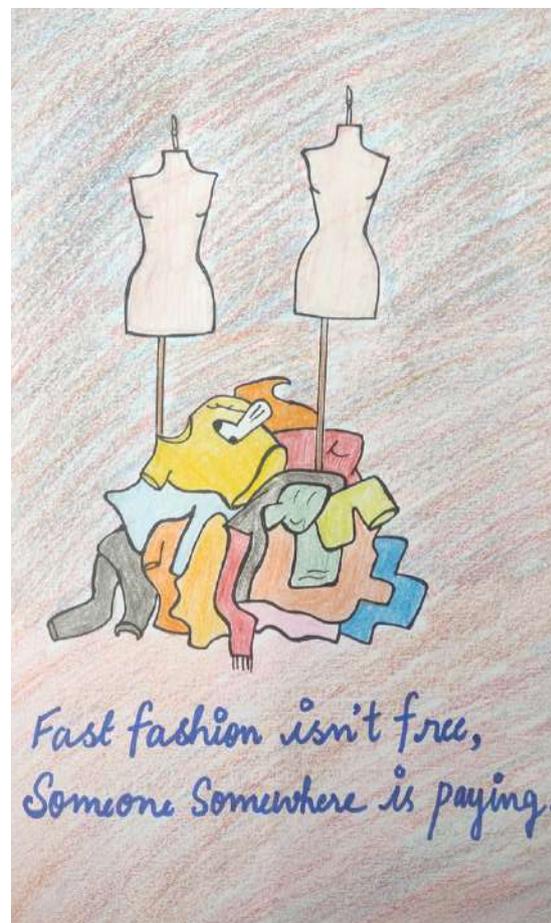


Illustration: Bharti Khandelwal , B.A. Programme, Second Year

countries is bought by countries like Kenya and Mozambique. These countries have so much waste accumulated that the only way to get rid of this pile is by burning which again releases greenhouse gases. The clothing industry alone produces greenhouse gases more than airlines and maritime industries combined.

Moreover, fast fashion brings societal impacts having employed the underage, providing bad working environments, and unfair wages. A 2018 U.S Department of Labor report found evidence of forced and child labour in countries like Argentina, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Brazil, China, Philippines, Turkey, Vietnam, and many more. The wage of garment workers, primarily women, in Bangladesh is \$96 per month. It is 3.5 times less than the amount required to live a decent life with basic facilities by an individual. Along with the above countries, the African continent is also affected due to the prevalent textile industry waste dumping.



Considering the above effects of the fast fashion, one has to realize that fast fashion, though tempting, has to be resisted. Having a large wardrobe with clothing for every occasion might be a requirement but one can use this wardrobe smartly. One has to be encouraged to wear the same garment more than once. In a society with great pressure to be updated and modern, it might be difficult to normalize wearing clothing more than once and buying second-hand clothing. But let us question ourselves on what is more important, the lives of those young children working in the industries and the ruining environment, or meeting the fashion standards? It is high time that we change our perceptions and start reconsidering our way of life, and take on fashion.

[1] Tina Yinyin Wang, "Consumer Behavior Characteristics in Fast Fashion," Textilehogslokan, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1312256/FULLTEXT01.pdf> , August 2010

[2] Jessica Gee, "How Fast Fashion Affects Climate Change,"Prezi, https://prezi.com/p/agndh0_n6gxj/project-nexus/ , Updated Nov. 2, 2019

CSR and Brands Capitalising on Social Awareness



Kriti Jalan

B.A.(H) Political Science

First Year

With the political atmosphere and system failing on a global level, people are no longer passive citizens governed by the state. Social awareness and the demand for change are at the top and people have become quite creative in the way they protest or support something.

As a result, choosing a particular brand is not just about its quality anymore, for brands have become a rather unorthodox medium to navigate change and make a difference. Brands have become a way for people to express their values and commitments. Consumers have become belief-driven buyers who shop with a conscience.

At the same time, brands are also driving to become culturally relevant. Most of them are well aware of the concept of 'noble edge effect', that is, corporate social goodwill elevating a company's profits by improving the consumers' perception of its products. As such, brands are developing an activist like stance, and are capitalizing on the increasing awareness of people.

Over the years, some brands have managed to do it well. One of the great examples is Lacoste's 'Save our Species' campaign. The campaign idea is so simple, yet unique and utterly brilliant. Lacoste designed a limited-edition line that swapped out the beloved crocodile logo for 10 threatened species. A total of 3,520 polos were released representing the number of each species remaining in the wild. The impact and success of the campaign was undeniable. The polo shirts themselves sold out in less than 24-hours, while campaign videos and other content was shared over 600,000 times.[1] Another example can be Nike's 'Dream Crazier' campaign that focused on the subject of gender and double standards female athletes are subjected to.

Of course, while the brands do these campaigns to attract the conscious consumers, we cannot forget that often these campaigns are also done to protect the brand's image from past mistakes and backlash. Thus, while Airbnb should be praised for its advertisement 'we accept' showing a montage of people of different nationalities, aired days after president trump closed American borders to refugees, let's not forget that the brand has come under fire itself for supposed racial discrimination occurring on its platform.

Brands also do not hesitate on capitalizing on social awareness to increase their profits. The perfect example is H&M's clothing line 'Conscious' launched with the claim that clothes are made using sustainable and recycled material.

But when Hasan Minhaj, an American comedian and political commentator tested those clothes, it turns out the only thing made out of ‘recycled’ material was the tags on the clothes and the ‘sustainability’ promise treats clothing as disposables and tricks us into buying more. Some suggest that this campaign is an effort at “greenwashing,” distracting from the extent of the harm the company does, and even boosting sales

Thus, in this era of capitalism, brands will do everything in their power to increase their sales and protect their image. The responsibility falls upon the consumers to not only hold the brands accountable, but also digs deeper into the claims of certain brands before supporting them.



Illustration: Nidhi Kanaujia, B.A. (H) Political Science, First Year

[1] Zavy. “3 Social Campaigns that Nailed CSR and Made a Difference.” zavy.co. <https://www.zavy.co/blog/3-social-campaigns-that-nailed-csr-and-made-a-difference> (accessed on May 15, 2020)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**Exploring Food Waste
and Consumption**

Status of Food Corporation of India



Soumya Verma
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Second Year

Food Corporation of India was established under the Food Corporation Act 1964. Initially, the FCI was at the forefront of India's Quest to self-sufficiency in procurement and stocking of grains like rice and wheat that supported the Public Distribution System (PDS).

However, as time passed, we saw the Food Corporation of India not live up to its purpose. Its operations were regarded as expensive and inefficient and some began calling the institution 'Food Corruption of India' in the late 1990s. The main reason behind this title was the poor storage conditions in the 1970s and 1980s which meant a lot of grain was lost to pests, mainly rats. Diversion of grain was also widespread, prompting a former chairman to declare that there was a problem with "human rats" as well.

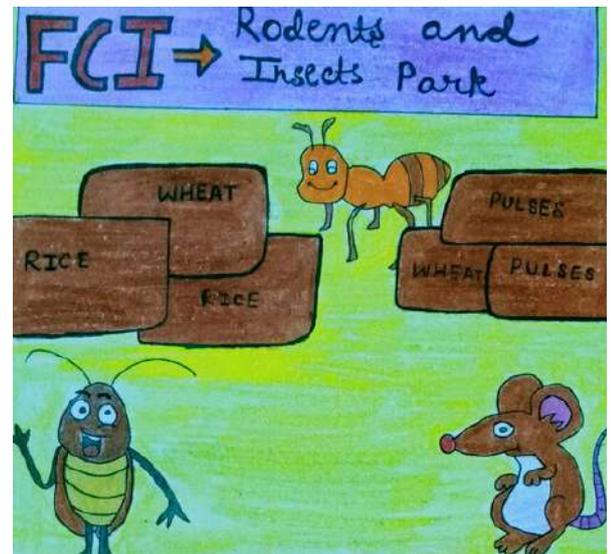


Illustration: Soumya Verma, B.A. (H) Philosophy, Second Year

The government has also not been paying FCI. In fact, over the last three years, the government has only been arranging loans for FCI from the National Small Savings Fund for large parts of the dues to the corporation on procurement. In 2018-19, FCI's borrowing from NSSF stood at a record 1.91 lakh crore. This information prompts the question: why is FCI not distributing grains properly and instead accumulating stocks? The answer to this question is that FCI does dispose off its stocks from time to time. While a portion of the stock goes to the TPDS (Targeted Public Distribution System) and households identified under NFSA (National Food Security Act) and other welfare schemes, the balance is sold through the open market sale scheme (OMSS) and FCI does not get a good price most of the times – and actually ends up selling below the cost and ends up incurring a loss.

Furthermore, at times when production of grains is high and the Centre makes huge procurement, private traders avoid buying from farmers in *mandis* (farmer market) during the harvest time and wait for the government's OMSS to buy at a lower price - the reserve price for OMSS also takes into account the prevailing market price.[1]

The probable solution to this is that the FCI needs to overhaul its operations and modernise them. The government should look at FCI problems with greater concern - provide proper funds and make laws and regulations which bring in profits to them and not losses.

[1] Rajalakshmi Nirmal (2019) "With stocks piling up, FCI is in deep trouble - The Hindu"

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/with-stocks-piling-up-fci-is-in-deep-trouble/article29268321>

Food Waste

Food is the Fuel to the Body. then Why does the Fuel Land Up in the Bin?



Sakshi Singhvi
B.A. Programme
First Year

The importance of food and its nourishment is well known to everyone but the staggering amount of food waste daily is very shocking. Is it sheer negligence? Well, yes for the most part. Food waste occurs at various stages of food production as well as consumption. The waste in production can be reduced drastically by developing storage and transportation technologies, especially in developing regions of the globe in comparison to the developed regions where it is quite low due to advancement. Another contributor to waste is food processing and marketing, which include confusion between best before and expiry dates, and high cosmetic standards to name a few.

The biggest culprits are us, humankind, which is possibly not so kind to food and the needy as well. The amount of waste can not just feed the hungry, but also contribute to saving our Earth and its environment which is ultimately our habitat and our sustainer. As a matter of fact, an area larger than the whole country of China is used to produce food which is never eaten! Shocking, right? 25% of freshwater grows food which lands up in bins and not stomachs. Water shortage is one of the major global issues, and reducing food waste can ultimately help in aiding the global water crisis as well.

Let's move to the greenhouse gases. If yearly global food waste's emission are taken into account, it is the third-largest producer of greenhouse gases after the top 2 countries. In monetary terms, the value of globally wasted food on an annual basis is a staggering \$1 trillion. Yes, you read it right! \$1 trillion can be a boon to people in need on this globe.

So, after stating all of these facts, one clear conclusion is to stop this food waste or at least reduce it, for starters. Strong rules, regulations, and laws are of course required, but to tackle this issue effectively, focus on grassroots level can prove to be a smart move.

Everyone has heard that 'charity begins at home'. Inculcating food saving habits in children from a tender age can produce great results. At a young age, children are more malleable, they take the shape of the mould. All that is needed is the correct mould. Sensitization about food waste and hungry stomachs all over the world. Talking about statistics, around 1 billion hungry people can be fed on a quarter of wasted food in the US and Europe. [1] Several organizations are working towards this cause by collecting leftover food and distributing it to those who need it. In the coming time, the population will be increasing, and to sustain them, more and more food resources will be needed.

Let's pledge to tackle this issue on a war footing. Joining not just hands but souls can make us face this challenge and succeed with flying colours.

We have to do it and we can do it!



Illustration: Anoushka Aggarwal, B.A. Programme, First Year

[1] Olio. "The Problem of Food Waste." olioex.com. <https://olioex.com/>

खाने की बर्बादी

Varsha

B.A. Programme

Third Year

खाना ज़िंदगी के लिए बहुत जरूरी है,
पर खाना न होने पर भूखे रहना कई लोगों की मजबूरी है।

खाना जीवन में स्वाद लेकर आता है,
पर कई बार यह विवाद का मुद्दा बन जाता है।

खाने के बिना ज़िंदगी की कामना करना कठिन है,
और इसकी कमी से शरीर में हो जाती कई बीमारियाँ है।

पर आजकल लोग खाना बहुत वेस्ट करते हैं,
और खाना खाने के नाम सिर्फ उसे टेस्ट करते हैं।

इसके बाद वो इसे कूड़ेदान में डाल देते हैं,
पर फिर भी वो अपने पढ़े - लिखे होने की ग़लतफहमी पाल लेते हैं।

आजकल खाना बर्बाद करना लोगों की आदत बन चुका है,
शादी हो या पार्टी सब जगह ये एक trend बन चुका है।

खाना सिर्फ हमारे नहीं बल्कि सबके लिए जरूरी है,
क्योंकि इसके बिना कई लोगों की ज़िंदगी अधूरी है।

खाने को बर्बाद नहीं बल्कि बचाना चाहिए,
और जितनी हो जरूरत उतना ही बनाना चाहिए।

पर फिर भी बच जाए तो दान करो ये अच्छा है,
जो ऐसा करता है इंसान वही एक सच्चा है।

ऐसा करने से हम कुछ लोगों की मदद कर सकेंगे,
और कुछ ना सही तो पेट उनका भर सकेंगे।



Illustration: Anupama Vijay, B.A. Programme, Second Year

Consumption and the Consumer



Durdanah Masoodi
B.A. (H) Political Science
Second Year

The topic depicts a brief write-up, but it actually covers profound sections within it. The focus, however, will be on 'the edible items ordered by the consumers in hotels, restaurants, or maybe at other places. Times have arrived that the cravings of a consumer are taken care of by just 'one-click.' A consumer has a variety of options to choose from in the form of various brands so as to choose whatever he/she wants to consume, we now have restaurants everywhere and almost at each step in big cities. From celebrating a small birthday party or success celebration to someone's grand wedding celebration in marriage halls, everyone now prefers to make various restaurants and hotels their point of celebration. From including various people, these celebration sites include 'various options' in almost every food category that guests have the option to consume. Looking at hotels and restaurants we see people order more food than they want to consume and some amount of food goes nowhere but directly to a dustbin. Consumers never take a minute to think about how this ordering of excess amounts of food leads to wastage of his/her own money and a wastage of resources too.

Ordering in a senseless manner, just depicts a lack of consciousness of people because though many consider it as a small topic to be discussed, it is just from these small mistakes that a big blunder is committed. Similarly, in grand celebrations the buffet system operates where a large amount of food is thrown out, or people keep ordering food online and many a times either don't like the food or eat just half of what has been ordered and the rest is thrown in the favourite box 'the dustbin'. Thus, it can be seen how blindly the process of ordering is followed through by consumers without caring about the wastage, and the sellers obviously capitalize on this due to their motive of 'profit' and never utter a word. This all leads to massive degradation of resources of a state in general and the formation of an irresponsible citizen.

This can be corrected with new measures in the market like regulating policies, having a limit in order, consumer awareness, along with information about the pros and cons (which will include our rights, duties, and strange and horrible ways by which we can be looted), and overall presence of a responsible consciousness. All this needs to be brought into place. Else the ideas like Sustainable development, aware consumers, etc will remain a dream.



Illustration: Bharti Khandelwal, B.A. Programme, Second Year

वो खामोश है!

Muskan Mehlawat
B.A. Programme
Third Year

वो खामोश है!

आज दुकानदार के हाथों बिक चुका ग्राहक का संतोष है,
इस अन्याय से भले ही उन्हें अभोत रोष है।
जानें पर भी क्यों वो खामोश है!

कहते हैं ये ग्राहकों का ज़माना है,
पर दुकानदार को तो मुनाफ़ा कमाना है।
इस स्थिति में भी ग्राहकों में ना जोश है,
दूर खड़ा सब देख रहा जानें पर भी क्यों खामोश है!

दिलो में सबके इंसाफ़ की माँग,
आँखों में सबके आक्रोश है इतने अधिकार होते हुए भी,
जाने भी क्यों वो खामोश है!

जब बहुत हो चुका अत्याचार है, पर क्यों सबके उलझे हुए विचार है?
क्यों ग्राहक को ना होश है जबकी समय की माँग सरफ़रोश है,
जाने पर भी क्यों वो खामोश है।

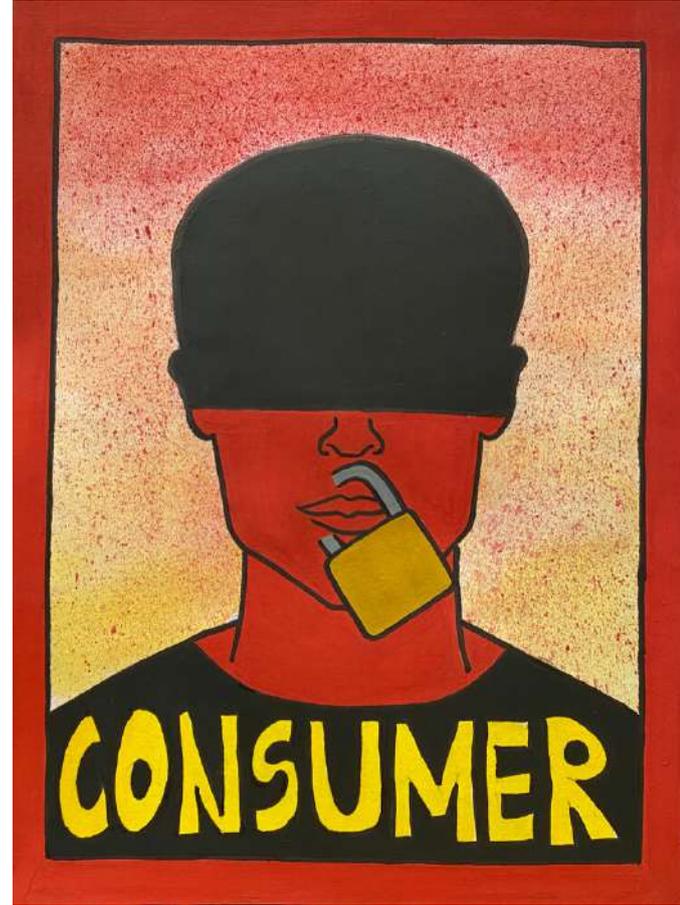


Illustration: Ibrat Sandhu, B.A. Programme, Second Year

Diya Kirttania

B.A.(H) Political Science

First Year

“*Satso ek Rupey shagun mein diya hai, kum hai kya? Aur thoda Rajma le, raat ko fir se bhuk lagegi to kaha se dungi?*” (We have given Rs.701 as a wedding present, is that less? Take some more beans, what will I give if you get hungry at night?) Or “*Beta, Didi ka nikaah hai, aur thoda pulao le lo!*” (Child, it is your sister’s wedding. Take some more pulao.) are a few of the remarks often teens and tweens get to hear when at a wedding, or reception or birthday or even at just any get together. Despite body limitations and constant disapproval, elders don’t leave a single occasion to fill up the plates of their fellow young companions. And this becomes the root of what we can call, ‘Food Wastage’.

However, it is not always the elders who insist for more food. Teens, and young adults failing to control their urges and greed for food, often take up food beyond capacity and end up wasting half the plate. This has become a crucial issue for developing countries like India, where more than half the population sleeps without food in their belly every night.

As per UN reports from 2017, nearly 15% of the Indian population is undernourished. India also houses the largest number of undernourished populations. Despite these gory reports, nearly 40% of food is wasted every year, which as estimated could cost around One Lakh Crore Rupees to India. And this is not just the end.

Sources of most food wastage in India include family occasions, get-togethers and parties, weddings and birthdays, and even hotels and restaurants. Large hotels and companies, with the promise of providing fresh food to their guests, dump the remains in dustbins and trucks. Though the consumption of food from dustbins is not prevalent in India, pictures of poor tramps and homeless vagabonds stealing and sneaking food off the bins come to light every once in a while.

‘*Pagpag*’ is a flourishing food business famous in the poor quarters of Manila, Philippines where poor people collect the waste or throw away meat from the dump yards and cook them again just to sell them off to other poor people.

However, with the growth of the ‘Hospitality Industry’ in India, the business bourgeoisie are trying to reduce the pre-order wastage i.e cutting down the quantity of food served to guests as per their capacity and serve to reduce wastage. Prime Minister Modi, while addressing the issue of Food Wastage in India also brought the issue to the limelight. This highlights the gradually growing awareness of citizens.

Hyundai in Chennai produces food for their 30,000 workers on the basis of their attendance to reduce food wastage and even caters the extra food to 'Little Drops', a nearby old age home. Sodexo, a French foodservice tries to reduce food wastage in their catering service while addressing their clients by putting up boards mentioning the amount of food they've wasted each day.

The 'Robin Hood Army' is not unknown to India. The Non-Profit Organization which started in 2014, serves to feed the hungry citizens of India. They started with a noble cause of voluntarily collecting wasted food from occasions and ceremonies and serving them to hunger clad humans. Now, because of the hard work they put into this cause, they have been able to extend their volunteering activities in the fields of education and all-round holistic development.

Despite the increasing awareness among the youth of India, food wastage remains an issue. But with determination and hard work, the dream of becoming a 'Zero Food Waste' nation can be accomplished.



Illustration: Ruchika Soni, B.A. Programme, First Year



IN THE FINE PRINT

**Consumer Issues, the Singular and
Sectoral Approach**



चलो! मिलावट की बात करते हैं

Muskan Mehawat
B.A. Programme
Third Year

चलो मिलावट की बात करते हैं,

दाल में से कंकर निकालने गए, तो आज बस कंकर मिलेगा....
पर क्या फ़र्क पड़ता है गरीब आदमी खोखली उम्मीद से अपने पेट पीर सिंगे...

हल्दी है, पर पाउडर भी है साथ...
वो कहते है "अरे कोई नहीं भैया , दिन क्या रात क्या एक ही तो है बात".

सब्ज़ियों और फ़लों में स्वाद अब कुछ फरटिलाईज़र का आता है...
प्रोफ़िट मारजीन के चक्कर में हमेशा आम आदमी ही पिस जाता है..

फिर भी वैक्स की परत से सब कुछ खूबसूरत है...
अजीब है ना उस माँ का बेचारापन भी,
कि दवा दी तो भी दुआ की ज़रूरत है...



Illustration: Honey Vijayvargiya, B.A. Programme, Second Year

The Tyranny of Coaching Centres



Sakshi Bansal
B.A. Programme
Second Year

This is a story of a starry-eyed 16-year-old who dreamt of studying in the best engineering college in the country to ensure not just financial security but also to gain a sense of respect in society. He took admission into an IIT coaching centre to turn this dream into reality for which he paid a large sum of money as fees for the 2-year long course, all in one go. After a few weeks, the rigorous and hectic schedule started taking a toll on him, and our protagonist comes to the realization that he is not cut out for it. So he went and inquired about the refund policy, only to be turned away after being pointed to a board that says “no refund”. Thus he not only lost his dream but also his family’s hard-earned money.

Sounds familiar? Most of us can recognize this protagonist. And some of us might have even lived this tale.

The sad fact is there is nothing unusual in this tale. This is an experience shared by many students alike in the country who bear the brunt of unfair practices of Coaching Centers, of which two of the most popular ones demand the entire course fees in one go before the beginning of classes and has a ‘no refund’ policy in place. Not only this, students are also made to sign an agreement with the two policies, which leads the students to believe that they can’t do anything as they signed a supposedly legal document. Most students who find themselves in this kind of situation continue with their study at the coaching centre despite the dissatisfaction with the services as they believe there is no way out.

The grave injustice here is so common that no one even recognizes it as a violation of Consumer Rights.

However, there have been a few defenders of the law who have pronounced judgments in favour of the students, holding coaching institutes guilty of their malpractices and ordering them to provide refund and compensation for the harassment caused. Examples of such orders range from *Allen Career Institute vs Anil Kumar Sharma* to *Lalit Garg vs FIITJEE* wherein it was stated that “No child can be confined to two years coaching against his/her wish.” Consumer Forum directed FIITJEE to refund the fees to the complainant. The court also upheld the policy of charging two years of advance fees as unfair trade practice. The Institute’s plea that they will be missing a seat and thus lose the revenue that would have come from it, is ridiculous.

The above-mentioned judgments prove that all is not lost and that we, as consumers, need to be vigilant about our rights so as to not fall prey to any malpractice. The court and law are on our side in the fight against securing an education in this profit-hungry society. Thus it is time we become conscious of our rights and implement the popular friendly jingle 'Jago Grahak Jago' into practice.

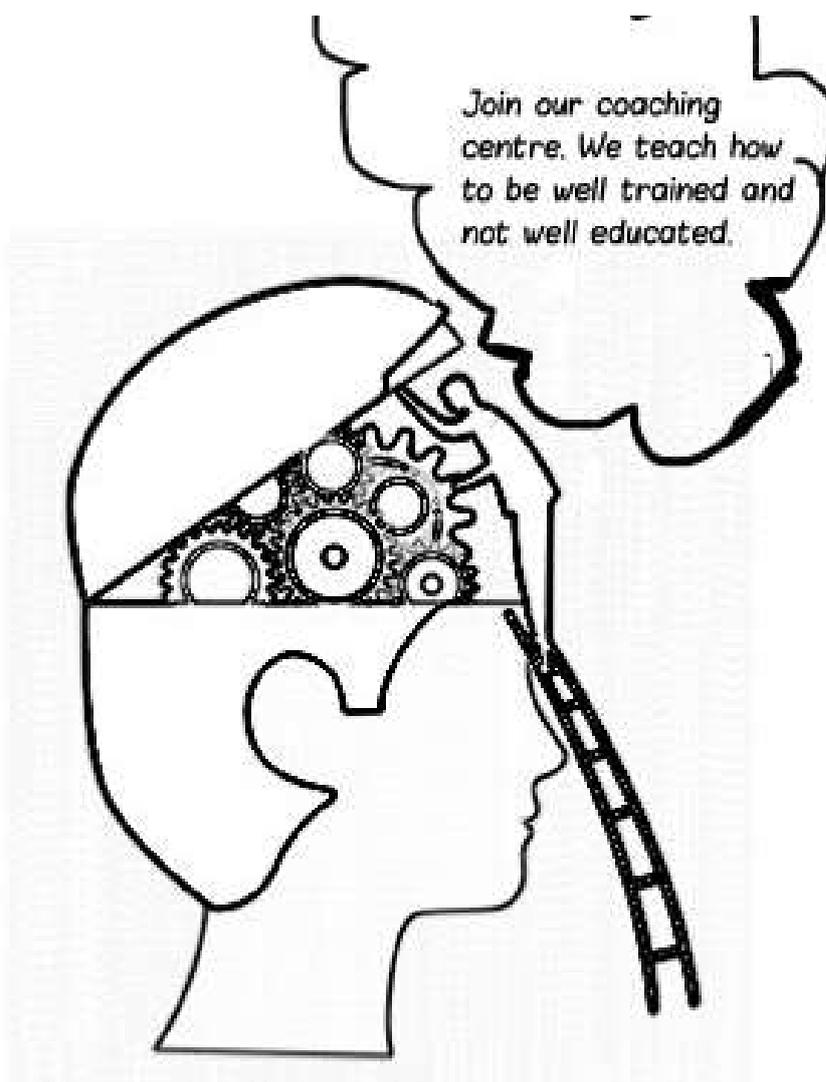


Illustration: Anoushka Aggarwal, B.A. Programme, First Year

[1] Kamini Mehta, "FIITJEE asked to refund fees," Times Of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/fiitjee-asked-to-refund-fees/articleshow/67955259.cms> , Feb 12, 2019

Real Estate Problems

Preet Arora

B.A. Programme

First Year

Who is a consumer? One who has trusty back from the producer. Who is a producer? One who has trusty back from the consumer. What if a line of cheating, hoarding, black-marketing, hoarding comes in between this chain? Real estate is a physical property that attracts consumers like a magnet. Consumers find real estate a fine solution to invest their hard-earned money but what if they get to know that they are being cheated on, someone playing with their asset? This will create a grim picture on that consumer's face. Is the above dictum as easy as it seems?

Real estate is generally considered a great investment option. It can generate ongoing passive income and good long term investment, especially if the value of that property is increasing (appreciating). Conditions for appreciation provided that it is in the utmost location, populated with the urban crowd, complexes, malls, etc. A good real estate is one that has its peculiar features relatively different from others and is prime by its nature and attractive and affordable to consumers.

What if even after the presence of such factors a real estate starts to devalue? What could be the reason behind its low development? Real estate can face multiple problems at a single point in time. Some of the major problems faced by today's generations of real estates are expressed below:

Economic Crisis

The global slowdown of the economy (global economic crisis). There are two possible reasons for this i.e. either the real estates are being developed by using cheaper resources to complete the property with low economic means due to scarcity of money that do not sustain the standards as per its cost or the economy is scarce between the consumers or buyers of such property. Due to sky-scraping cost of the estate middle-class people find it difficult to absorb such throat-cutting rates Especially the slowdown of the. the economy now at this point in the hour of life-threatening COVID 19 which will certainly create an economic crisis but there seems hope at the end of the ray for which we should wait.



Lack of Job Security

Usually what people used to do was own property by availing loans from banks. They were sure of their jobs as there was almost no competition for different posts. However, today's scenario is the opposite. Now, there is a kill and win situation for even minute designations (especially during COVID-19). People now have developed a feeling of insecurity for their jobs and they fear that if they availed loans from banks or cooperative societies or through any other means, and if at the same time they lose their jobs, then the situation will be virulent. They will be unable to repay their loans with a 'high rate of interest'. Thus people sacrifice the option of investing in real estate.

Politics and Political Uncertainty

This is a major reason that stands in opposition to the development of the real estate market especially in countries like India as the policies, facilities, incentives, relaxations provided by the current government may or may not be continued by the next government or the policies may transform, which may prove beneficial or virulent. This shows the uncertainty in this sector. Due to this reason, people do not step into this market even if they have economic support.

Immigration

Immigration impacts both residential and commercial real estate and affects both urban and suburban areas. Changes in immigration policies mean fewer new households, reduced owner demands, reduced broker transactions, and alike aspects with results in degradation of the real estate market. [2] HIGH-TAXATION GST has replaced the multiple levels of taxation previously applicable on home purchases but the increased simplicity has not resulted in better cost-efficiency.[3] Under construction, the property attracts 5% GST for midrange property and 1% for affordable homes, 5%-7% stamp duty is imposed registration charges are being levied which increases the cost of real estate as a whole.

Other Investment Options

Other options like start-ups, mutual funds have emerged which can be initiated with lower investments as compared to real estate investments, and these other investments also earn a high rate of interest with proper debt-equity ratio combinations. These problems must be tackled with greater intensity like the stabilization of property policies by the government, political stability, security of jobs, proper economic policies that stabilize the economic power of investors as well as dealers.

With COVID-19, the recovery of the real estate market will probably be at a very slow pace as well as very stressful, made evident from various projections made by different institutions concerning the growth rate [4]

Hence dealing with the current situation requires a good hand of cooperation and coordination from the side of consumer as well as producer with proper strategy and intervention of government as well as the private sector and the concept of fiscal stimulus i.e. support (mainly financial) without getting in a trap of deficit too.

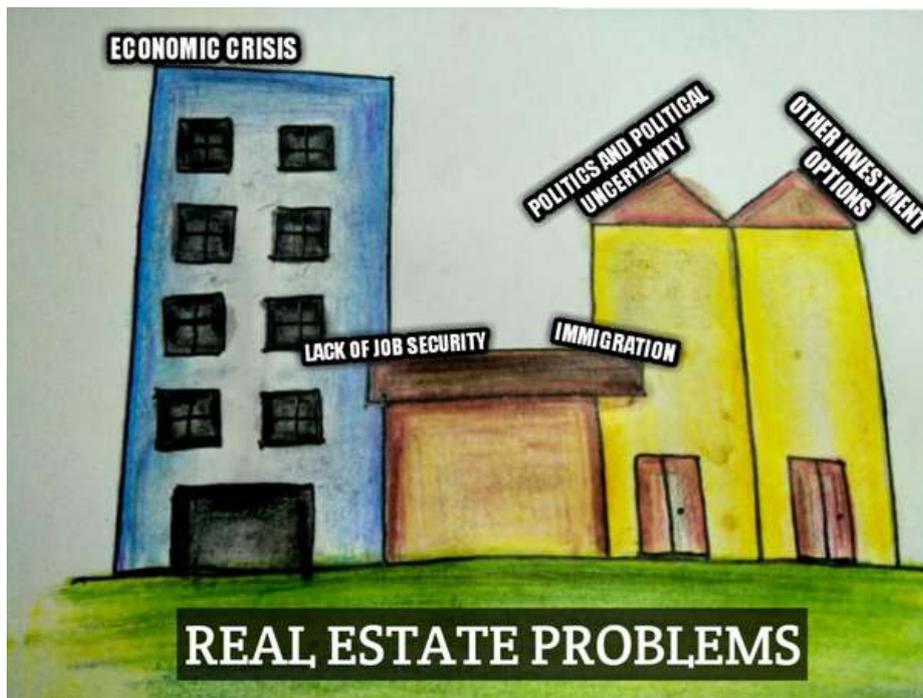


Illustration: Prerna , B.A. (H) Philosophy , Second Year

[1] Realty Mogul. “ 20 Famous Real Estate Investing Quotes.” realtymogul.com . <https://www.realtymogul.com/knowledge-center/article/20-famous-real-estate-investing-quotes>

[2] Basile, Caroline. “These are 5 Issues Impacting Real Estate Right Now.” housingwire.com. <https://www.housingwire.com/articles/43673-these-are-the-5-issues-impacting-real-estate-right-now/>

[3] Fernand, Larissa. “10 Reasons Why the Real Estate Sector is in a Slump.” morningstar.in . <https://www.morningstar.in/posts/54373/whats-causing-slow-real-estate.aspx>

[4] Narayanan, M.K. “Stress Points of Democracy.” thehindu.com. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/stress-points-of-democracy/article26272814.ece>



THE STATE'S APPROACH

Government and Policies

GST: A Boon or A Bane



Vaishali Chaudhary

B.A.(H)Economics

Second Year

GST (Goods and Services Tax) is a significant step in the field of indirect tax reform. It proposes the unification of a large number of taxes levied at the central and state level into a single tax. There are FIVE TAX SLABS in GST- 0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%. Under this system, the tax rate, rules, and regulations will be governed by the GST Council (GSTC) which is chaired by the Union Finance Minister, supported by the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in charge of Finance and taxations of all states as other members of the council. GST is applicable based on the supply of goods and services against the manufacture or sale of goods and services. It is based on the principle of destination based on consumption taxation, rather than the principle of origin based on taxation.

The advantages of GST include the removal of cascading effects and availing input tax credit, streamlining of online compliances and payments which can help in the regulation of the unorganized sector, simplification of the tax structure across the nation, enhanced productivity of logistics because the restriction on interstate movement has reduced, facilitates in eliminating distortion and forms a common national market.

Various trade-offs related to GST are as follows:

1. Increasing inequality: GST levied on the rich and the poor is the same, and if the poor consume more (Marginal Propensity to Consume of the poor is greater than the rich) the incidence of the tax would be more on them. Therefore any increase in GST rates would lead to an increase in inequality. Given the rule-based budgeting or FRBM Act, if the rates do not increase then the government expenditure would remain low.

2. States Autonomy: Under the GST regime, individual states won't be able to decide the rates autonomously. This will make states mere tax collecting agents. Even if the rates are uniform, the price of commodities depends on other factors like cost of production, cost of inputs, demand, and supply. Therefore variation in tax rates explains only a small fraction in total price variation.

3. The shift of burden from producers to consumers: GST is an ad-valorem tax and is based on destination-based tax. The incidence of such tax falls on both consumers and producers, given the negatively sloped demand curve and non-decreasing cost schedule. From the macroeconomic point of view, GST rates above Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) would decrease the propensity to consume.

This would lead to even lower employment and output because the MPC of the poor is higher than that of the rich, also weakening the multiplier. But under the GST regime, IGST has to be higher than RNR which would drive the average prices up and the economy will be operating below full employment capacity.



Illustration: Himani Choudhary, B.A. (H) Economics, Second Year

4. Compliance: If the administration improves, leading to an expansion of tax information and a reduction in corruption, then compliance may improve even without GST. Furthermore, there is no empirical evidence that the combined tax collection by states and the Centre will make the states less corrupt and efficient. If taxes are too high and multiple taxes are clubbed together then invasion is easier.

5. Revenue Neutral Rates: Whether a state will incur revenue loss or not depends on the difference between the SGST and RNR of that state. There is no consensus about the rate of RNR. If the actual GST rate is higher than RNR then there will be inflation, which is detrimental to growth and inequality. If the rates are lower, then the combined tax revenue would come down as a proportion of GDP.

6. Low Technological Capacity: GST is an IT-driven law and all the states aren't equipped with the necessary infrastructure needed to implement the system to its fullest extent.

COVID-19 has led to the crash in revenue collection. The lockdown led to the contraction of core sector output and thereby reduced the collection of GST. Sources have confirmed that GST collection went down by 90% for most of the states in April. The major drop in the collection is the reason why states are clamouring for relaxing liquor sales. With COVID-19 affecting the collections, we need better compliance and the government has already announced a relaxation of interest by 9% for big companies and the majority of companies will have to pay no interest, late fee, or penalty. The other step the government can take is the exemption of GST on essential goods and services, which will make sure they are available at a reasonable price. It may prove to be a hurdle for MSMEs because under this regime they will have to register in each state where they supply their goods and services. There have been cases of tax evasion and GST laws have been the most complex on the account of design faults and frequent tinkering. According to a report by Arvind Subramanian and Kapil Patidar, in the first year of GST, revenue grew by 11.9% and the buoyancy was 1.2 which shows progressiveness in the revenue growth, opening up the prospect of raising tax-to-GDP ratio. Implementation of GST is a daunting process and I believe the positive impacts of GST are yet to be witnessed by the whole nation.

Swachh Bharat: A Vision for India, A Promise to Indians



Sakshi Singhvi
B.A. Programme
First Year

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan or the Clean India Mission is an ambitious mission launched on 2 October 2014, to drive India towards cleanliness and ultimately towards well being and development. It is a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, who believed in loyalty to mankind and not to ethics. It aims to tackle the issue of open defecation and make India free of this health issue by 2019. This mission will also help India to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6, which provides access to sanitation to all.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is necessary to make India cleaner and healthier, where most of the people live in rural areas with insufficient sanitation facilities and knowledge. Government is helping in construction of toilets for personal (household) use. A large number of public toilets are also being constructed to increase the awareness and to make the message of cleaner India reach the masses.

This mission does not serve only one issue, it's a multi-faceted mission to make India move towards inclusive development. It tries to resolve the issue of waste management by making people aware of dire consequences of improper waste disposal. It also attempts to level up India's image in the eyes of the globe, where our nation is considered unclean and dirty. Government is trying to make sure that no incident like the 2010 *Commonwealth Games* about cleanliness occurs ever again, making India's image drop in comparison to developed countries.

It has attracted people from all nooks and corners of India to participate in awareness campaigns and make this issue a national priority. This Abhiyan is not just a mega cleanliness drive, but it is a mental battle, a battle of mindsets and various social taboos. It should not only be a governmental priority but we, the responsible citizens of India need to transform it into a mass phenomenon and make it deep rooted in our hearts. So we as Indians need to join our hands and widen our mental horizons to make this *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* a success.



Illustration: Anisha, B.A. Programme, Second Year

Who Pays This Tax?



Anupama Vijay
B.A. Programme
Second Year

“Luxury is feeling unrushed. It is designing a life that allows you to do what you want with high leverage, with many options, all while feeling unrushed”. -Tim Ferriss

Luxury is an uncertain and indefinite service or commodity. The most expensive Exotic Wheel car is a luxury for many, but not for all, a green-rendering field is also a luxury for many but is not for all. One thing intensively noticeable and spot-on is that luxuries are not necessities. It is variable and is as reliant, to a large extent, on human aspirations as on their income.

In economics, we define luxury goods as those goods whose demand is directly proportional to the income of the consumer, or simply when the income rises the consumption of luxury goods rises and vice versa. Luxury items may or may not be an integral part of a person's lifestyle depending upon the income, emotions, taste, experience, and some other things. Reviewing economics once again, economies across the world levy a luxury tax on the consumers, undoubtedly, to increase the state revenue, by extracting it from the consumers who can afford to pay.

The whole objective of this essay is to discuss the questions and trends allied to luxury goods. Although the tax is levied on the consumers, but who really pays luxury tax, what's the alteration on the demand of such goods, the concept of target audience, etc. are some of the questions taken forward here. China is the country with the highest amount of consumption of luxury goods, mostly due to digital shoppers aging less than 37 years, the fact is undeniable stating the importance of youth in building up not only luxurious, but any kind of markets.

Earlier, luxury goods were limited to clothes, vehicles, perfumes, handbags, watches, etc., but as the world is globalizing and connecting, food and travelling has made it to this list and hence, made luxury more dynamic. Traveling is a luxury good that is well admired and currently amongst generations and millennials. Food, on the other hand, is both a necessity as well as a luxury. What an oxymoron. Demand creates its own supply. Markets sustain on the basic principles of demand and supply, and, for the growing demand there is mushrooming of many small-large industries. The age bracket of the consumers is drastically changing and to cope up with this immediate shift, industries are focusing upon the target audience and their priorities. Youth want quality, reliance, and confidence in any particular consumption good.

According to a survey conducted by the Super-Office, by 2020, 86% of the consumers are likely to pay more for a better customer experience, and the price of the product will become a secondary influence. Social Media is playing its role, here again, the more you see the more you believe. Advertisement of travel packages on different social media sites has increased its consumption and consumers are ready to pay a luscious amount of taxes and rents for a worthy service.

We come to the point again, who really pays these taxes.

Taxing luxury goods seems a logical way to fill the government treasuries because it is generally functional to the rich, but do the rich themselves pay this tax?

The answer is very surprising. NO! Retreating to the little economic knowledge, the demand for these luxury goods is very elastic, which suggests that the change in demand is very high with a change in its price.

Whenever the tax is applied, the final market price for a consumer is going to shoot up, hence, increasing

the ambiguity for the consumers, whether to invest in that particular expensive good (let's say a private airplane) or deposit money in a savings account (which is the opportunity cost for that private airplane). On the other side is the supply of luxury goods, which is quite inelastic i.e. the quantity supplied changes less in proportion to a change in its price. An industry producing airplanes cannot shift its capital and labor into alternatives as swiftly as the demand of a potential consumer change.

Clearly, this elastic demand and inelastic supply put the burden of this luxury tax on suppliers because consumers step out of the deal with rising prices and therefore the suppliers end up getting a lower price for the product. The tax burden is relaxed by low wages for the workers in the industry and hence the one who really pays the tax and suffers is the middle class, not the rich.

In India, the 28% GST slab contains many luxury products and services like a 5-star hotel stays, a parlour visit, a luxurious car, but what we need to understand as consumers is that as the consumption of these goods and services reduces, the suffering party is the worker in automobile industries, the sweeper at a parlor, and the waitress at the 5-star hotel. It becomes necessary to understand and clarify certain doubts arising from these amalgamated sources. What we see at a first glance need not be true and should be understood.



Illustration: Jahnvi Chourasia, B.A. (H) Political Science, First Year

जागो ग्राहक जागो (व्यंग्य)



Anisha Yadav
B.A. Programme
Second Year

'जागो ग्राहक जागो', एक ऐसा नारा है जो देश के प्रत्येक ग्राहक को अपने अधिकारों के प्रति जागने की प्रेरणा देता है। इसे भारत सरकार ने लागू किया ताकि भगवान के समान ग्राहक को किसी भी समस्या का सामना नहीं करना पड़े और वह अपने अधिकारों के प्रति जागरूक रहे।

किंतु देश की सरकार की बदकिस्मती है कि वह इस बात से वाकिफ़ ही नहीं कि देश का बच्चा - बच्चा तो पहले ही जागा हुआ है। अब जागे हुए इंसान को जगाने का क्या फायदा? दिन दूनी रात चौगनी बढ़ती महंगाई ग्राहक को सोने ही नहीं देती, उसे डर लगा रहता है कि कब उसने यहाँ पलक झपकी और कब वहाँ महंगाई उचकी। ग्राहक के इतने जागरूक होने के बाद भी सरकार चिंतित है क्योंकि उसे लगता है कि ग्राहक सो रहा है। दरसअल सो ग्राहक नहीं रहा, सो रहे है ग्राहक को जगाने वाले। यदि ये लोग ही जागते और सतर्क रहते तो इस तरह ग्राहक की नींद ही नहीं उड़ती। सरकार आए दिन महंगाई बढ़ाती जा रही है ताकि ग्राहक जागता रहे और जागरूक रहे, पर सच्चाई ये है कि जो सबसे ज़्यादा जागता है वह ही सबसे ज़्यादा अपनी जान जोखिम में डालता है।

सरकार ये सारे कार्य कभी भी खुद के फ़ायदे के लिए नहीं करती, वह तो इसलिए करती है ताकि उसके देश का ग्राहक जागता रहे, वह कम खाये जिससे ना तो उसका वज़न बढ़ने जैसी समस्या हो, ना कोई डायबिटीज़ जैसी बीमारी। देश की सरकार को तो अपने ग्राहकों की इतनी चिंता है कि जितनी शायद एक माँ को भी अपनी संतान की ना रही हो। एक माँ भी संतान को दो रोटी की भूख होती है तो तीन लाकर दे देती है। वह उस कहावत को भूल जाती है कि "कम खाया नहीं मरता ज़्यादा खाया मर जाता है" पर मेरे देश की सरकार ऐसी भूल कभी नहीं करती क्योंकि वह सतर्क है।

जिस तरह सिगरेट के पैकेट पर लिखा होता है 'सिगरेट स्मोकिंग इज़ इंजूरियस टू हेल्थ' उसी तरह सामानों के पैकेट्स पर लिखा जाता है 'जागो ग्राहक जागो' जिसका एकमात्र उद्देश्य सिर्फ़ उस पैकेट की डेकोरेशन करना होता है ताकि

ग्राहक उसकी तरफ़ आकर्षित हो, ना कि ग्राहक को जगाना क्योंकि ग्राहक तो पहले ही उसकी कीमत सुनकर जाग जाता है। अब वह दिन भी दूर नहीं जब सरकार द्वारा 'जागो ग्राहक जागो' कानून लागू किया जायेगा जिसके अनुसार दुकानदार को या तो दुकान के बाहर बड़े बोर्ड पर लिखवाना होगा 'जागो ग्राहक जागो' या हो सकता है लेज़र लाइट से भी प्रदर्शन करना पड़ जाए और ऐसा ना कर पाने के जुल्म में न्यायालय के कठोर कारावास से दंडित किया जाएगा क्योंकि अभी भी सरकार का एक मात्र उद्देश्य तो यह नारा ही ग्राहकों तक पहुंचाने का है। जागो ग्राहक जागो, अपना हक मांगो।



Illustration: Anisha, B.A. Programme, Second Year

One Product, One Price!



Vyshnavi Pulluru

B.A. Programme

Third Year

Dual MRP policy is a practice under which sellers charge higher MRP for their products in certain public places like malls, theatres and airports etc. The issue came into limelight due to a complaint about higher MRP for bottled water in INOX multiplex. Let us first understand this issue clearly. MRP, which means Maximum Retail Price, is the highest price that can be charged by the seller. Dual MRP is the case where the seller charges higher MRP for the same products in crowded places which are otherwise available for less cost in general. As demand is usually high in such places, sellers take advantage by doing so.

In order to resolve this issue, the Central Government told State Governments that they are competent enough to take action in these cases and issued an advisory regarding the same. We can see that states like Maharashtra have been pretty active regarding these issues. For instance the case where the legal metrology department of Maharashtra issued a notice to companies like Coca Cola, Pepsi, Red Bull, Flipkart, Amazon etc to desist from the practice of dual MRP. However, most of the other states didn't do much about it.

All packaged commodities like bottled water are covered under the Legal Metrology Act of 2009. But the sellers have exploited the loopholes present within the act. And this paved the way for an amendment in 2011, which mandated for certain information to be declared on the merchandise like name and address of the manufacturer, dimensions of the commodity, MRP, etc and also directed to increase the size of labelling on the product. The law clearly states that retailers have no right to fix the MRP. The right to do so is in the hands of either manufacturer, packer or importer. As Douglass MacArthur rightly said " Rules are mostly made to be broken". While he said this, even though the context was entirely different, it's so ironic that it's true in the present context as well. Even after capping the MRP, many companies don't seem to be displaying the prices, making it difficult for the consumers.

With the introduction of GST, retailers started taking advantage of the situation and started charging prices more than the MRP, stating that the price mentioned on the product is exclusive of the taxes. Though the government provided certain rules in order to curb this practice, rules have hardly been followed by the sellers! A law becomes effective, not because it is a law, but because there is a right in it. Here, it is clear that rights of consumers are being violated. The Government can take certain steps like placement of vending machines with retail MRP product versions at public places, putting a cap on prices that restaurants can charge above the MRP due to consumption of additional services, and having no MRP is also an additional problem which should be taken care of.

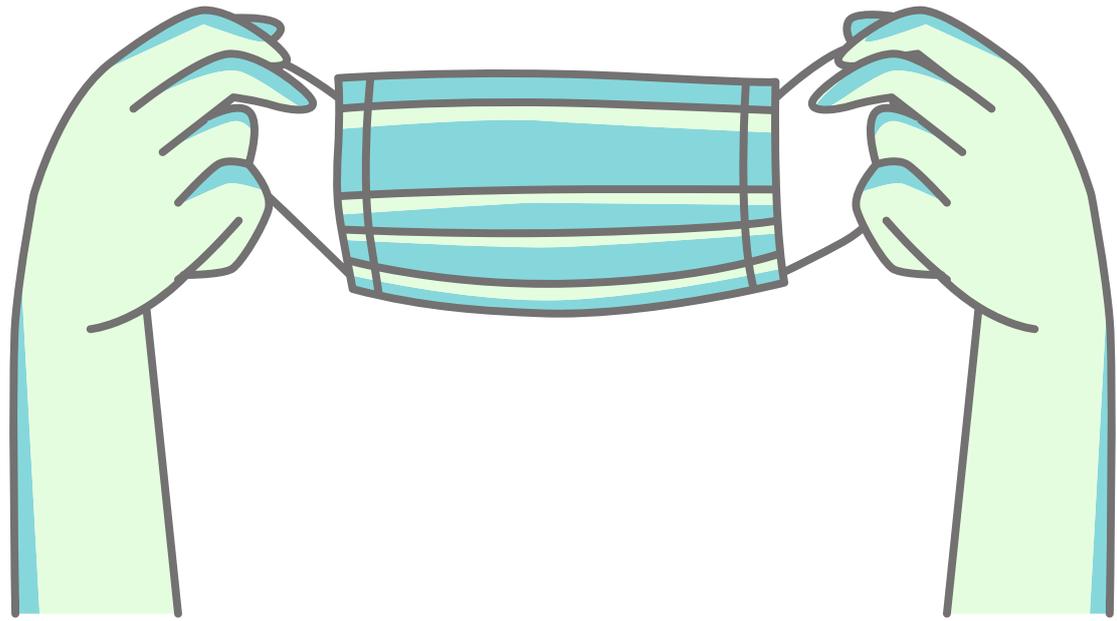
Every-time the Government cannot make a law while these sellers find a way to exploit the weaknesses present in it. They ought to feel responsible about it. Only because they are sellers, their motive cant be just about profits. It must be something above and beyond it. Consumers are subjected to numerous instances of exploitation and malpractices - Adulteration, misrepresentation, false advertisement, etc to state a few.

As consumers, we have the power to change the world by being just more careful in what we buy. In the 21st century which is mostly driven by consumerism, protecting the rights of consumers is the need of the hour because the entire economy is dependent on the very demand made by the consumers. This can easily be witnessed in the Pandemic Situation right now where the government is following easy money policies to boost the demand in the country to sustain itself from this unforeseen circumstances.



Illustration: Darshita Aynyas, B.A. Programme, First Year

CONSUMING A CRISIS



COVID and Consumption

Bharti Khandelwal
B.A. Programme
Second Year

The coronavirus pandemic has taken the whole world by storm. While people are caught up in the fear of contracting the virus, the nationwide lockdown not only in India but all over the world has led to severe disruptions and widespread confusion among people. Consumer behaviour in India and across the world has also changed rapidly and dramatically throughout the crisis. Consumers are deeply concerned about the impact of COVID-19, both from a health and economic perspective.[1]

One of the responses visible to how people are approaching this period of isolation and uncertainty is in huge overnight changes to their shopping behaviours. From bulk-buying to online shopping and e-commerce, people are changing what they're buying, when, and how.[2]

On one hand, people in Western countries are unexpectedly and shockingly stocking up on toilet paper leading to a supply deficiency in various countries. Supermarkets, malls, and shops have to resort to various tactics to assure people that they don't need to hoard toilet paper and that it will also be available later and simultaneously control the sale of toilet paper. "In Japan, toilet paper rolls are chained to the wall in public restrooms. In Australia, supermarkets have restricted supplies to one pack per person. In America, people seem to be stocking up for days, along with toilet paper, pasta and meat, bottles of virgin olive oil also flew off the shelves. President Trump has called people to stop hoarding groceries and other supplies." [3]

In India on the other hand, there has been hoarding of groceries. "At a market in suburban Mumbai, an SUV drives in and the vehicle owner instructs the vegetable seller to pack 5 kilograms of every vegetable that is available". [4] People can be seen lining up at grocery stores buying months of groceries in advance (without following social distancing).

"According to findings of an Accenture (NYSE: ACN) survey of more than 3,000 consumers in 15 countries across five continents, conducted between April 2 and April 6: The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to alter consumer behaviours permanently and cause lasting structural changes to the consumer goods and retail industries". The findings indicate that many of the changes in consumer behaviour are likely to continue long after the pandemic. Additionally, the crisis is also causing consumers to more seriously consider the health and environmental impacts of their shopping choices. Furthermore, the survey analysis concludes that the pandemic is likely to produce a more sustainable, healthier era of consumption over the next 10 years, making consumers think more about balancing what they buy and how they spend their time with global issues of sustainability — suggesting a healthier human habitation of the planet.[5]

Now it's the need of the hour that people's purchases be centred on the most basic needs, they should shop more consciously, buy local, avoid hoarding and panic buying and should embrace digital commerce.

As more cities are going under lockdowns, non-essential businesses are being ordered to close, and customers are generally avoiding public places. Limiting shopping for all but the essentials is becoming a new normal. Brands have to adapt and become flexible to meet changing needs. The response to the pandemic has been different across generations, with consumers of different age groups responding differently to the crisis.

Fear is running high as individuals contemplate what this crisis means for them, but more significantly, what it means for their families and friends, and society at large. Amid this chaos, an international health emergency, with no one having any idea as to how to move forward in this - ethical consumption, can be the answer to a sustainable future.



Illustration: Ibrat Sandhu, B.A. Programme, Second Year

[1] Krishna, Vishal. "How COVID-19 Changed the Behaviour of Consumers and Retailers in India." yourstory.com. <https://yourstory.com/2020/05/covid-19-consumer-retailer-behaviour-lockdown>

[2] Meyer, Susan. "Understanding the COVID-19 Effect on Online Shopping Behavior." bigcommerce.com. <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/covid-19-ecommerce>

[3] Agencies. "COVID-19 : Here's why people are hoarding toilet paper." economictimes.indiatimes.com. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/covid-19-heres-why-people-are-hoarding-toilet-paper/an-unlikely-target/slideshow/74653772.cms>

[4] Saraswathy, M. "Coronavirus Pandemic| Will Hoarding be the New Normal in India?." moneycontrol.com. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/coronavirus-pandemic-will-hoarding-be-the-new-normal-in-india-5133731.html>

[5] Accenture. "COVID-19 'Increasing Consumers' Focus on "Ethical Consumption" ." newsroom.accenture.com. <https://newsroom.accenture.com/news/covid-19-increasing-consumers-focus-on-ethical-consumption-accenture-survey-finds.html>

Annual Report



Aishwarya Sharma
Vice-President
2019-2020

TULA-Miranda House Consumer Club commenced this Academic year of 2019-20 with all the enthusiasm to spread the word of consumerism around.

TULA, which stands strong with its values and determination, began its academic year with the Orientation day on 9th August 2019 starting with enthusiastic faces crowding in the Seminar Hall. The turnout saw students from the first, second, and third year, all geared up to feed their inquisitiveness about TULA. The President of TULA, Vyshnavi Pulluru commenced the presentation by enlightening students about Tula being one of the most active Consumer Clubs in Delhi University which has been working for making people conscious of their Consumer Rights and helping them exercise the same. After having introduced the conveners and the Union members; various verticals of the society, Logistics and Creative, Public relations and Sponsorship, Research and Redressal and Editorial were introduced to the prospective members by the Vice-President, Aishwarya Sharma, General Secretary, Bharti Khandelwal and Treasurer, Vaishali Chaudhary followed by the activities and competitions held last year and the activities we plan for the academic year 2019-20. The students were introduced to the past achievements of the club along with the fruitful experiences of the past members who had a great experience by being a part of TULA. After the insightful session, the students were shown a short film on "gendered marketing" and how consumers are ridiculed into buying products. After this, our convenor Dr Jayashree Pillai shared her insightful and enlightening words with the students and emphasised on the importance of Consumer Rights.

The Orientation was followed by the recruitment of students into various verticals under TULA-MHCC: Research and Redressal, Editorial, Logistics, Public Relations, Creative, and Sponsorship and we received a jaw-dropping response of over 150 students for the same. Following this, the Heads of the various verticals were appointed following a rigorous interview procedure. Maanya Kamble and Mansi Sharma were appointed as the Heads of the Editorial Board. Prerna Sinha and Anoushka were appointed as the PR and Sponsorship Heads. Soumya Verma and Supriya Bhandari were appointed as the Heads of the Research and Redressal Vertical. Anisha Yadav and Divya Choudhary were appointed as the Heads of the Logistics and Creative Verticals. Lakshita was appointed as the Photography Head.

TULA conducted the 'Annual Workshop on Consumer Affairs' from 25th September 2019 to 27th September 2019, wherein the students got the opportunity to interact with several experts in various fields of consumer affairs.

The first day featured two sessions, with the first speaker being Mr Amitabh Lal Das, Director and Head – Legal Max Life Insurance. He drew on the importance of having a consumer law, its background, and recent amendments in the Consumer Protection Act. The second session on ‘Misleading Advertisements’ had Dr. Isheeta Rutabhasini as the resource person. The second day proved to be very thought-provoking for the participants, as it saw speakers like Mr. Anuj Saxena and Ms. Priyanka Kochchar, who drew on the topics of ‘Consumerism and its Consequences’ and ‘Sustainability in My Home’, respectively. On the third day, a session was conducted on ‘Intellectual Property Rights’ with Ms. Sanah. This workshop concluded with a roadshow to generate awareness about consumer laws in the campus. Slogans like “Jaago Grahak Jaago, Apna Haq Maango” were raised enthusiastically.

In October, we were given a great opportunity to participate in the National Nukkad Natak Competition. Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) of the Government of India invited TULA- MHCC to participate in an Inter-College Nukkad Natak Competition. The theme of the competition was "Integrity- A way of life" (Imandari Ek Jeevan Shaili). The students from the society participated enthusiastically on the topic ‘Ration Cards’. The society members showed great enthusiasm and team spirit for the same.

The Vigilance Awareness Week Programme was conducted by TULA-MHCC in collaboration with the Department of Political Science on 30th October 2019. The speaker and The Chief Guest was Mr. Rajit Punhani, Chief Vigilance Officer, NTPC. The Speaker Session was followed by the Integrity Pledge, a Flash mob, Elocution, and Vigilance Awareness Quiz. The even semester which started off in January was marked by new study sessions organized by the Research and Study vertical of TULA. A lot of deliberation and exchange of thought happened during these sessions. Topics varying from procedure to filing complaints in Consumer Courts to debates on consumerism and its social implications were led by the vertical heads with utmost enthusiasm. The society set on to the compilation of SANTULAN- The annual magazine of TULA by sending out a word for articles, posters, poems, and surveys. We were left astounded by the huge number of entries by students who enthusiastically put out their creativity on paper.

Tula was supposed to have celebrations for International Consumer Rights Day in mid-March but they were put off due to the pandemic, COVID-19. But that didn’t dampen our spirits and we celebrated it on our social media handles. Along with that, we kept working hard on Santulan through virtual meetings under the constant guidance of our Convener and teachers.

The academic session 2019-20 was a fruitful venture filled with the spirit and determination to learn and grow.

TULA Student Union-2020-21



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Preet Arora 2019/56 **B. A. Programme, First Year** preetarora2308@gmail.com



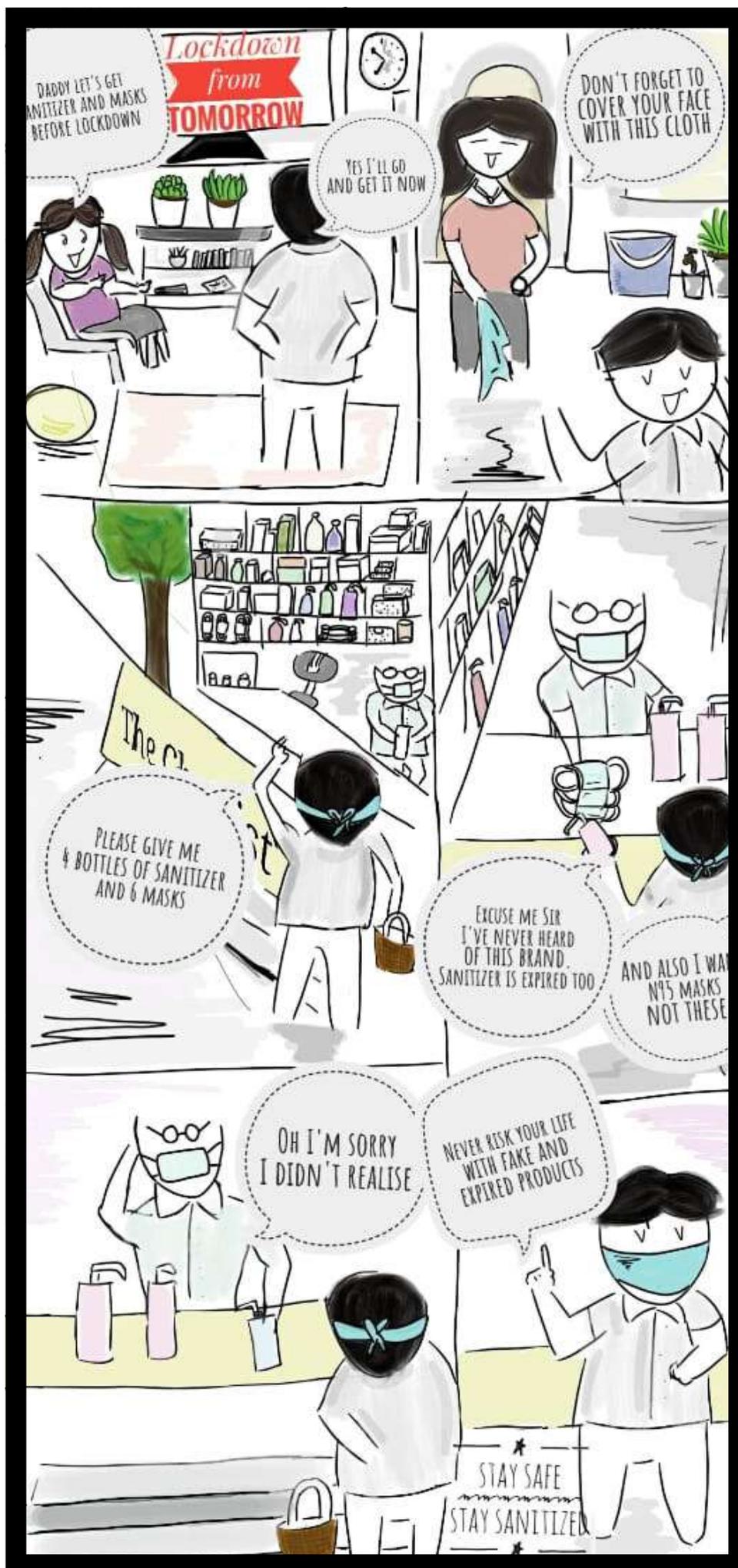
Consumers can be the real kings only when they learn to raise their voice against wrong, that can be possible only when they let go the fear of trying. Maybe you will fall once, but if after trying, once we give up, then I must say there would have been no birds in the sky, no man will walk, no world would exist.

Illustration: Muskan Mehlawat, B.A. Programme, Third Year



The photos depict how universal consumerism is and no matter what, one never ceases to be a consumer.

Photography by: Lakshita, B.A. (H) Sanskrit, Second Year





ETHICAL CONSUMPTION REQUIRES YOU TO THINK BEFORE YOU SHOP. TO CONSIDER JUST HOW YOUR LIFESTYLE AFFECTS OTHER PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES, AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENT. AN ETHICALLY-INFORMED CONSUMER REALISES THAT WHEN THEY BUY SOMETHING, THEY ARE NOT ONLY BUYING THE PRODUCT.



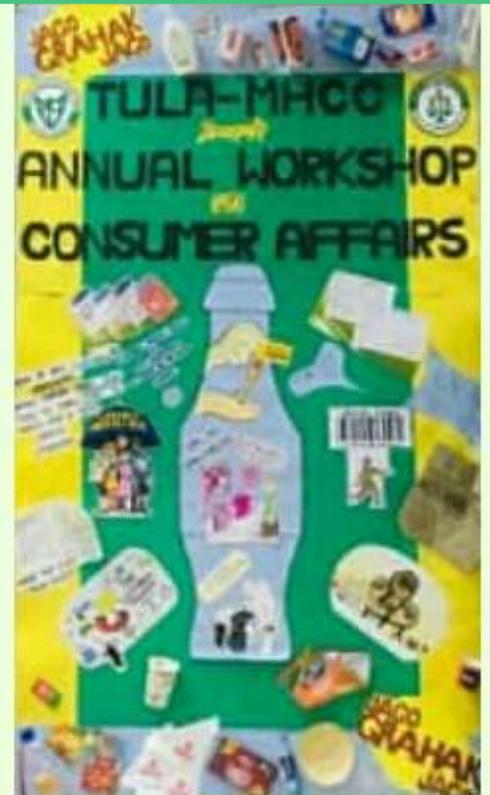
GLOBAL WARMING

CLIMATE IS CHANGING

WHY AREN'T WE?

Raising awareness on the most pressing environmental issues of our time is more important than ever

LET'S MAKE A CHANGE!
LET'S PRACTICE SUSTAINABLE LIVING
IT'S THE ONLY WORLD WE HAVE



Posters..
slogans..
illustrations..
Graffiti..
quotations
and the many
moods of Miranda
House Consumers!

TULA-MHCC

EXTENDS ITS
SUPPORT ON BAN OF
SINGLE USE PLASTIC
ITEMS

ONLY 1 IN 5 PLASTIC BOTTLES ARE RECYCLED

The energy required to make one plastic bottle could recycle ten plastic bottles

EVERY ACTION COUNTS



THE RIGHT TO SATISFACTION OF BASIC NEEDS.

THE RIGHT TO SAFETY.

THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION.

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE.

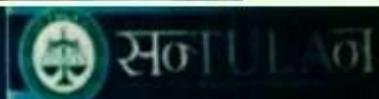
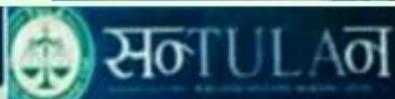
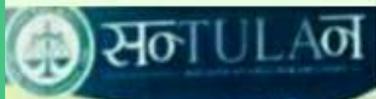
THE RIGHT TO REDRESS.

THE RIGHT TO CONSUMER EDUCATION.

THE RIGHT TO CONSUMER REPRESENTATION.

THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.

WORK TO UPHOLD THE RIGHTS THAT PROTECT CONSUMERS.



Consumers towards the right path...



ETHICAL CONSUMPTION REQUIRES THAT YOU KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY TO CONSIDER NOT ONLY YOUR OWN PERSONAL WELFARE BUT ALSO THE WELFARE OF OTHER PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENT. A FULLY INFORMED CONSUMER WILL BUY AT THE MOMENT WHEN THEY BUY SOMETHING, THEY ARE NOT ONLY BUYING THE PRODUCT.



TULA-NICC
EXTENDS ITS
SUPPORT TO THE
SINGLE USE PLASTIC
BOTTLES

ONLY 1 IN 5
PLASTIC BOTTLES
ARE RECYCLED

KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS

TULU-NICC
ANNUAL AWARENESS
CONSUMER AWARDS

Right to be treated without discrimination

Right to know their rights

Right to be heard

Right to Security

comfortability, safety

Right to

seek compensation

Right to choose

services /products