

CONSUMER
AWARENESS

A SOCIAL SCIENCE PROJECT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

"Awareness Begins Here"

In a world full of choices, how often do we, as consumers, stop to consider whether the products and services we purchase are truly serving our best interests? Every day, millions of consumers interact with markets, often unaware of the risks and challenges they face. What if these interactions aren't as straightforward as they seem?

Consumer exploitation is a hidden issue that touches all of us, but it's not always easy to recognize. It takes many forms and can sometimes be masked under the guise of convenience or a great deal. From deceptive advertising to faulty goods, how can consumers protect themselves from such practices? What measures can be taken, and who is responsible for ensuring that consumers are not being taken advantage of?

This report will dive into the complex world of rights and protection of consumers and roles played by various organizations to ensure fairness. Are we truly aware of the forces shaping our consumer experiences?



WHO IS A CONSUMER?

"Every buyer is a consumer - Know your power!"

A consumer is any individual or group who purchases or uses goods and services to satisfy personal needs or wants. Essentially, anyone who buys or uses products - from groceries we buy to the electricity we consume or smartphones we use - is a consumer. Consumers can be individuals, families, or organizations, and their primary role is to demand goods and services.

While it might seem like a simple concept, the role of a consumer goes beyond just purchasing goods. Consumers drive economic growth, influence business practices, and shape the marketplace. As the demand for certain products increases, producers respond by adjusting prices, improving quality, and offering innovative solutions. Thus, consumers play a crucial role in the economy, making their awareness of rights, responsibilities, and protections essential.

Understanding the role of a consumer is essential in recognizing the impact of our choices in the marketplace.



CONSUMER EXPLOITATION

FACTORS, WAYS, FORMS, MEASURES

"Stop Exploitation - Stand Up, Speak Out!"

Consumer exploitation refers to unfair treatment or manipulation of consumers for the financial gain of businesses or individuals. It occurs when consumers are deceived, misled, or harmed by companies or suppliers who take advantage of their lack of knowledge, resources, or bargaining power.

Factors leading to Consumer Exploitation (Why it happens)

- Lack of consumer awareness
- Illiteracy or low education levels
- Limited access to information
- Unorganized consumer groups
- Ignorance of rights and responsibilities
- High competition among sellers
- Corruption or weak enforcement of laws
- Misleading advertisements
- Desire for low prices of quick purchases
- Monopoly or lack of choices in the market

Ways Consumers are Exploited (How it happens)

- Overcharging
- Underweight or less quantity
- Adulteration
- Selling defective or substandard products
- Misleading packaging or labelling
- False or deceptive advertisements
- Absence of proper bill or receipt
- Non-availability of after-sale services
- Hoarding and black marketing
- Expired or fake products being sold
- Violation of warranty terms
- Online frauds or scams
-

Forms of Consumer Exploitation (Types it Takes)

- Economic exploitation - Charging more than MRP
- Physical exploitation - Selling products causing injury
- Emotional exploitation - Misleading, manipulative ads
- Moral exploitation - Selling items that go against public values (eg - fake religious products)
-
- Legal exploitation - Violation of rights and laws

Measures to Prevent Consumer Exploitation (Preventive steps)

- Consumer Protection Act
- Competition Law
- Consumer Courts
- 'Jago Girahak Jago' Campaign
- National Consumer Helpline
- Standard Marks
- Quality Certifications
- Awareness Campaigns by NGOs
- Media support and Investigations
- Educational efforts in schools

We will study about these measures in detail later.



IMPORTANCE OF AWARENESS

"An Aware Consumer is a Protected Consumer."

Consumer Awareness means knowing your rights, responsibilities, and the correct information before buying goods or services.

When Consumers are aware:

- They ask for bills and verify prices
- They check expiry dates and certification marks
- They make smarter and safer choices

Awareness helps consumers avoid cheating, low-quality products, and unfair practices. It empowers people to take legal action if they are wronged. An aware consumer is not only careful but also becomes a responsible citizen who supports fair trade.

Consumer awareness also puts pressure on sellers to be more honest.

In short, a well informed consumer makes the market better for everyone.



CONSUMER PROTECTION

"Protect Consumers, Protect the Future."

Consumer Protection refers to steps and laws made to safeguard consumers from unfair trade practices, exploitation, and faulty goods or services. It aims to ensure that buyers get correct information, quality products, and fair treatment in the market.

Over the years, the growing number of products, advertisements, and marketing tricks has made consumers vulnerable (as read in "consumer exploitation"). This is why consumer protection has become essential.

Through consumer protection, we aim to:

- Promote fairness in the market
- Educate people about their rights, responsibilities
- Encourage businesses to follow ethical practices
- Provide easy ways to get justice

Ultimately, consumer protection helps build trust between buyers and sellers and creates a safe, honest market for all.



CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT [1986/2019]

"Protection is our right - Law is by our side!"

Consumer Protection Act, 1986

First Law in India created specifically for consumers

It provided and recognized the Consumer rights.

It set up the Consumer Courts at three levels, to help file complaints in fast, simple and affordable ways.

It promoted fair business practices and made seller accountable, for defective goods and deficient services.

Consumer Protection Act, 2019

Replacement of 1986 Act to meet modern markets.

It introduced Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), a regulatory body to prevent consumer exploitation

Covers new protections for consumers involving E-commerce, misleading ads, product liability.

Allows consumers to complain through electronic means (online)



CONSUMER RIGHTS

"Know your Rights - Claim Your Power!"

SIX BASIC CONSUMER RIGHTS

1. Right to **SAFETY**

Protection against hazardous goods and services that may cause injury or health issues.

2. Right to **INFORMATION**

Consumers must be given complete information about products - price, quality, quantity, ingredients, terms of use, etc.

3. Right to **CHOOSE**

Freedom to choose from a variety of products and services at competitive prices without any pressure.

4. Right to be **HEARD**

Consumers have right to express complaints and opinions and expect their concerns to be addressed.

5. Right to **REDRESSAL**

Consumers can seek compensation or replacement for defective products or poor services.

6. Right to CONSUMER EDUCATION

Right to acquire knowledge and skills to be an informed consumer.

- These rights ensure fair treatment and protection against exploitation in the market.
- These rights help individuals to make informed choices and seek justice if harmed.
- These rights are promoted under the CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2019.



CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY

"Celebrating Rights, Empowering Consumers."

24 Dec

NATIONAL CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY (INDIA)

Celebrated on : 24th December every year

[On this day, Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was passed]

- Marks India's commitment to protect consumers
- Various programmes and activities are conducted by government, consumer forums, NGOs, and schools to promote CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT.
- Includes awareness rallies, poster competitions, legal camps, and media campaigns.

15 Mar

WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY

Celebrated : 15th March every year

[Introduced by former US President John F. Kennedy who first spoke about consumer rights in 1962]

- Highlight issues faced by consumers worldwide and push for better laws and protection
- Has a different global theme each year to focus on important issues like digital safety, product standards, sustainability, fair trade, etc.

Consumer Rights Day reminds citizens that knowing and exercising their rights is the first step toward protecting themselves in the marketplace.



**WORLD
CONSUMER
RIGHTS
DAY**

**NATIONAL
CONSUMER
RIGHTS DAY**
DECEMBER 24



CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES

"Responsible Consumers build Better Markets."

16 Rs of Consumer Responsibilities :

- **Read** - Understand product info and terms
- **React** - Take Action when exploited
- **Record** - Keep proof of purchases and complaints
- **Rectify** - Seek to correct issues
- **Review** - Regularly check product details
- **Reconsider** - Avoid impulsive decisions
- **Rely** - Choose reliable sources / sellers
- **Resolve** - Aim to solve problem peacefully
- **Resist** - Say 'no' to unfair practices
- **Relay** - Share awareness with others
- **Recognise** - Know your rights and needs
- **Research** - Compare products and sellers
- **Responsibility** - Use resources wisely
- **Respect** - Respect environment and laws
- **Reflect** - Think before buying
- **Report** - Inform authorities if harmed

Be aware, Be cautious, Be honest, Be active, Be wise,
BE RESPONSIBLE!



Compare products and prices
Use resources wisely
Respect environment and
Think before buying
Inform authorities if you

Be aware of quality of products
Be honest in dealing

QUALITY CERTIFICATIONS

"Certified Processes build Trusted Products."

Quality certifications are official recognitions given to companies or manufacturers who follow specific quality management practices. These certifications ensure that the processes used in production are consistent, safe, and follow industry standards.

They help build consumer trust in industries

Some common quality certifications include,

- ISO 9001 - International quality management system Standard

- FSSAI License - Safe and hygienic food manufacturing
- GMP - For medicines, cosmetics and food
- BIS Certification - From Bureau of Indian Standards for manufacturing.
- ISI Certification - Certificate of compliance.

These certifications ensure that manufacturers make products under regulated and verified procedures. They are not printed on the product. Companies usually get certificates from organizations like FSSAI and BIS.

Apart from certifications, standard marks directly appear on product to show they meet quality and safety standards.

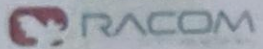
TDS Brno - Služba řízení jakosti a certifikace, p. s.
Lidická 25/2, Vondřovice 602 02 Brno
Certification body accredited by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports No. 2125
Czech Republic, www.tds.cz, ISO 9001:2015

CERTIFICATE

No. TDS 06/2023

The TDS CERT
certification body
for management systems
confirms

on the basis of a positive result of recertification audit No. 28/2023
that the company



RACOM s.r.o.
Mirová 1283
CZ - 592 31 Nové Město na Moravě
IČO: 463 43 423

has established and applies a quality management system
in accordance with

ISO 9001:2015

in the line of

development, design, production, installation, service and sale
of the electric, electronic, telecommunication and radio equipment.

This certificate is valid until 21st May 2026.

Company has been certified since 2005.

Further explanation as to the subject and certificate as well as to applicability of requirements referring to
Standard ISO 9001:2015 can be obtained at the indicated organization.

Brno, 22.05.2023



Ing. Michal Šenkýř
Director of certification body



Certificate

This is to certify that

Here Show Organization Complete Name Pvt. Ltd.

Here Show Organization Complete Address India

Here Show Organization Complete Address India

has been found in Compliance with requirements of

Good Manufacturing Practice

GMP

for the following scope:

Here Show Organization Complete Scope
(i.e. Manufacture / Training / Service of ABC)

Certificate No. : XXXX/XXX/XXXX

Issue Date : XX - XX - XXXX

Expiry Date : XX - XX - XXXX

To check this certificate status visit:
<http://aad.iaf.com/certificateorganization.html>



Authorized Signature
International Accurate Certification

211, 2nd Floor, S.G. Shopping Mall, D.C. Chowk,
Sector-8, Rohtak, Delhi-110005, India
www.iaacert.com & info@iaacert.com

This certificate remains the property of International Accurate Certification (IAI)
to whom it must be returned on request. IAI accredited by UKAS, (England) UK

STANDARD MARKS

"Trust the mark, Trust the quality."

- Standard marks are symbols printed on products to show that the item meets a recognised standard for quality, safety or purity. These marks make it easier for consumers to make informed choices and avoid being misled.
- Each mark represents the approval of a specific authority after the product passes required testing.



Name	Abbreviation	Standards Organization	Product Category
ISI Mark	Indian Standards Institution	Bureau of Indian Standards	Industrial Products
AGMARK	Agriculture Mark	Directorate of Marketing and Inspection	Agriculture Products
BIS HALLMARK	Bureau of Indian Standards	Bureau of Indian Standards	Gold and Silver Ornaments
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Food Products
FPO Mark	Fruit Products Order	Ministry of Food Processing Industries	Processed food products
Non-Polluting vehicle Mark	Non-Polluting vehicle Mark	Central Pollution Control Board	Automobiles
ISO Mark	International Organization for Standardization	-	Most Products
BEE Label	Bureau of Energy Efficiency	Ministry of Power	Electrical Appliances
Veg and Non-Veg Marks	Vegetarian and Non Vegetarian Marks	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Food Products
Silk Mark	-	Silk Board of India	Silk products
Handloom Mark	-	Ministry of Textiles	Handloom Products
Wool Mark	-	Ministry of Textiles	Wool Products

COMPETITION LAW

"Fair Competition, Fair Choices."

Competition law is a set of rules that prevent unfair business practices and ensure fair competition in the market. It aims to stop companies from forming monopolies or using their power to harm other businesses or cheat consumers.

In India, the Competition Act, 2002 replaced the MRTP Act (Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act). To enforce this law, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was set up in 2003.

Competition law focuses on three main areas to ensure that businesses don't FORM CARTELS (secret groups) TO FIX PRICES, MISUSE POSITIONS, ENGAGE IN UNFAIR TRADE:

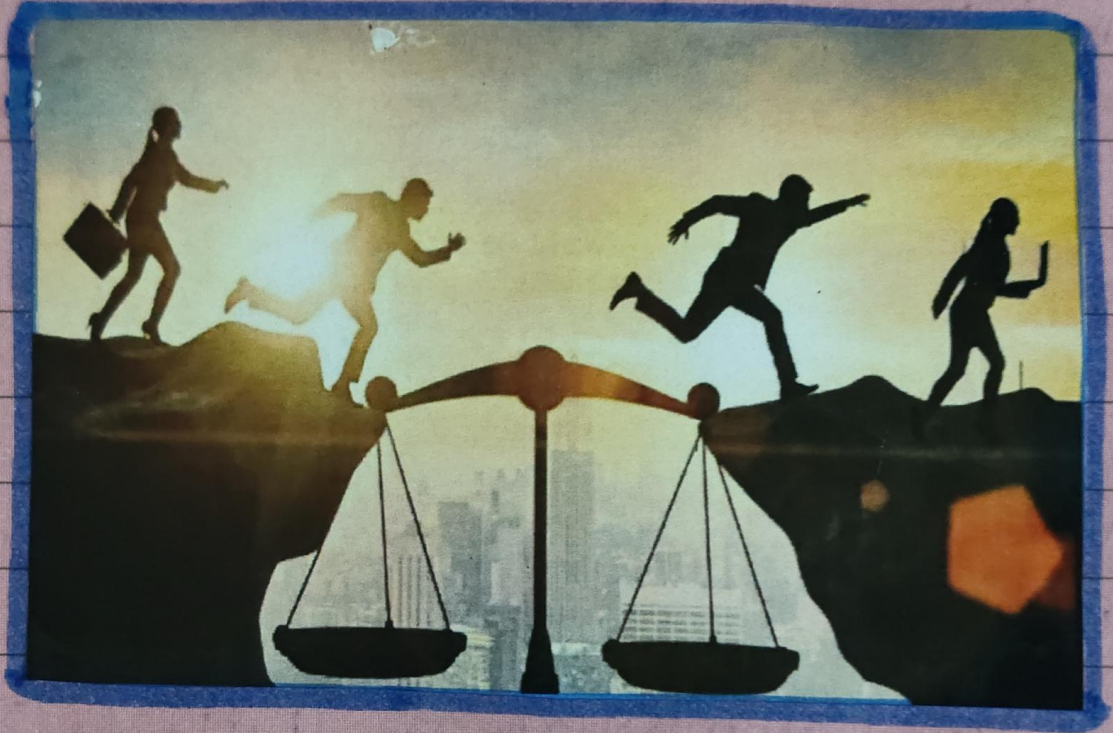
- Prohibit anti-competitive agreements
- Controlling abuse of dominant position
- Regulating combinations (mergers & acquisitions)

It ensures:

- Fair prices
- More choices
- Better quality
- Innovation

It discourages:

- Price fixing, overcharging
- Monopolies
- Exploitation
- Dishonest and unethical practices

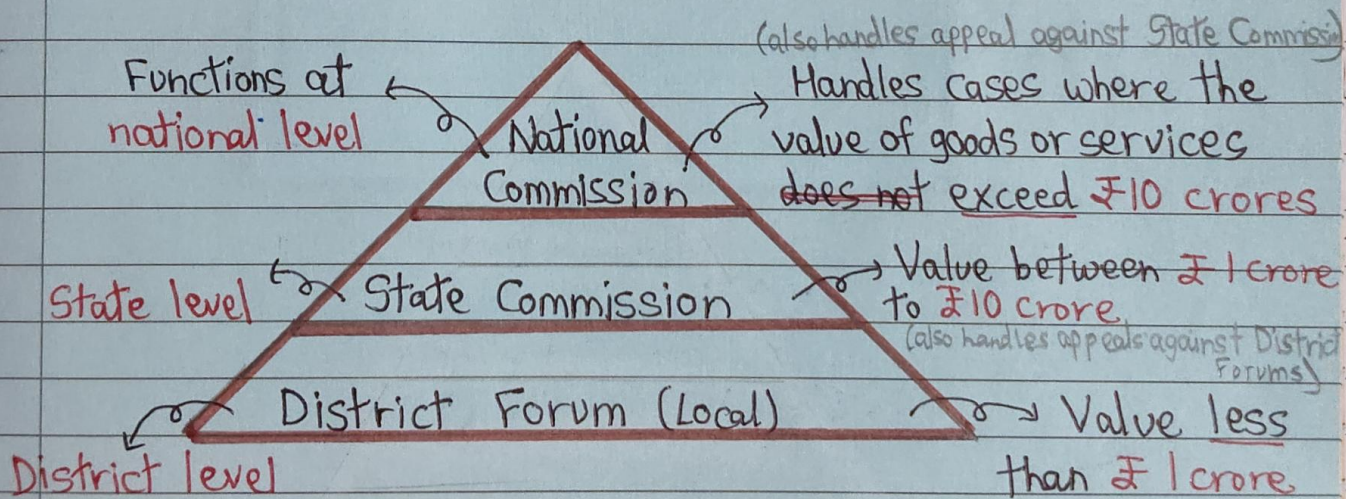


CONSUMER COURTS

"Justice for consumers, Help is available."

Consumer Courts are special judicial forums formed to provide quick and effective redressal of consumer disputes. These courts ensure that the consumers have easy access to justice without delays and complexities of regular courts.

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 set up a three-tier system of Consumer Courts



These courts are meant to be consumer-friendly, with simplified procedures and no requirement for legal representation, making it easier to complaint. Complaints addressed include:

- Defective goods
- Deficient services
- Unfair trade practices
- Overcharging

STEPS TAKEN BY GOVT. & NGOs

"Together for Consumer Awareness."

Govt. Steps

- **Consumer Protection Act** -
Legal protection for consumers
Sets up Consumer Courts
- **Campaigns ("Jago Grahak Jago")** -
Educate people about rights
through TV, radio, news, etc.
- **National Consumer Helpline** -
A toll-free helpline for
consumer complaints
- **State Helplines, Lok Adalats** -
Settle disputes quickly and
easily
- **Inclusion in School Curriculum** -
Consumer rights and responsibilities
are taught in schools to build
early awareness

NGO Steps

- **Consumer Guidance Societies** -
Free legal advice for complaints
Eg - CERC
- **Awareness drives** -
Organize workshops, rallies,
and campaigns
- **Research and surveys** -
Identify issues faced by
consumers and report
- **Legal Aid and support** -
Helps consumers fight cases
by offering legal assistance
- **Publishing informative material** -
Distribute booklets and leaflets
on product safety, labels, bills,
etc.

* NATIONAL CONSUMER HELP

1800 - 11 - 4000 or 1915

JAGO GRAHAK JAGO

Launched by : Ministry of Consumer Affairs, GOI

Started in : 2005

Objective : To educate consumers about their rights, duties, and available redressal mechanisms

Details :

- One of the most recognizable campaigns
- Uses television ads, news paper columns, bill boards, and digital media to teach consumers to
 - Ask for bills
 - Beware of misleading ads
 - Check expiry dates
 - File complaints
- Catchy taglines like "Jago Grahak Jago" (Wake Up, Consumer!) make it memorable and impactful
- Played a key role in making the Consumer Protection Act and Consumer Rights more well-known among common people.

This initiative made consumer awareness a national conversation and empowered even rural and semi-urban consumers.

* STATE CONSUMER HELPLINE

(GUJARAT) - 1800 - 233 - 0222

CERC [NGO Initiative]

CONSUMER EDUCATION & RESEARCH CENTRE, AHMEDABAD

Established in: 1978

Type: Non-Profit Consumer Organization

Objective: To protect consumer interests and promote fair business practices.

Details:

- Educates consumers through research-based reports, complaint redressal support, and awareness campaigns.
- Published the magazine "Insight", which informs readers about food safety, product quality, and new policies.
- Conducts product testing for food, cosmetics, and household items, and publicly reports unsafe products.
- They offer legal support to consumers and help file complaints in courts.

CERC plays a watchdog in India, holding companies accountable and making consumers more informed.

**JAGO
GRAHAK
JAGO**



National Consumer Helpline

Toll Free No. 1800 - 11 - 4000

ROLE OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE & INSTITUTIONS

"Awareness Grows where Knowledge Flows."

1. MEDIA - Strongest weapon of Awareness

- Reaches millions of people through TV, newspapers, radio, and digital platforms.
- Alerts the public about frauds, scams, harmful products and fake advertisements
- Runs awareness campaigns, interviews and expert advice segments.
- Helps expose companies that mislead consumers
- Educates people on how to file Complaints, ~~etc~~ check product details, and protect their rights.

2. SCHOOLS - The foundation of Awareness

- Teach students about consumer rights, responsibilities and how to stay Alert.

- Include topics of consumer awareness in textbooks, projects and exams.
- Encourage participation in debates, skits, poster competitions and awareness rallies.
- Develop the habit of questioning unfair practices and thinking critically.
- Train future consumers to be smart and informed from a young age.

Other key roles include :

3. BUSINESSES, CONSUMER-FRIENDLY BRANDS

- Responsible companies share accurate product information and follow ethical marketing.
- Offer clear customer care and complaint-handling systems
- Provide easy return policies, price transparency and genuine warranties.
- Help build consumer trust through honesty and clarity.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

- Make content on product reviews, unboxings, scam alerts and consumer tips.
- Their real-life experiences help people make better choices.

5. CELEBRITIES

- Can spread messages through awareness ads and set an example of honesty by refusing to promote false products.

6. FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Share valuable buying tips and personal experiences
- Guide each other on being smart and avoiding fraud

7. CONSUMER FORUMS, REVIEW PLATFORMS

- Provide first-hand experiences from other consumers which helps the new consumers to make informed decisions.
- They create a sense of community support, encouraging people to speak up and take actions instead of staying silent.



HOW STUDENTS CAN BE SMART CONSUMERS

"Smart Choices Start Young."

- Learn about consumer rights and responsibilities from school.
- Stay updated with news, trends, campaigns via social media.
- Build habits of reading labels, checking expiry dates, and comparing ~~products~~ products.
- Avoid impulse buying by thinking critically before spending pocket money.
- Prefer products that offer value, safety, and quality over popularity.
- Make informed choices by using online reviews, expert advice, and peer suggestions.
- Stay cautious while shopping online - check for trusted apps, ratings, and return policies.
- Confidently ask questions and report unfair practices.
- Participate in school activities like debates, skits, or projects to apply real awareness.
- Act as influencers within family and friends, spreading good consumer habits.



CASE STUDIES [Real-Life]

"Real Stories, Real Lessons."

1. Maggi Noodles Ban (2015)

Maggi noodles were banned after tests revealed excessive lead and MSG contents beyond legal limits. The controversy triggered nationwide panic, massive recalls, and legal battles, raising major concerns about food safety standards and consumer Rights in India.

2. Volkswagen Emission Scandal "Dieselgate" (2015)

Volkswagen installed software to cheat emission tests, deceiving consumers about pollution levels of their diesel cars worldwide. The scandal led to hefty fines, recalls, and damaged consumer trust in automobile industry transparency and environmental responsibility.

3. Samsung Galaxy Note 7 Recall (2016)

Samsung Galaxy Note 7 phones were recalled globally after multiple devices caught fire due to faulty batteries. The crisis raised serious questions about product safety, quality control, and company's responsibility towards consumer protection.

4. Facebook Data Privacy Scandal (2018)

Cambridge Analytica accessed millions of Facebook users' data without consent, using it for political targeting. This scandal spotlighted digital privacy risks, making consumers aware of how personal information can be exploited by corporations.

5. J&J Talcum Powder Lawsuits (2010s - ongoing)

Thousands of lawsuits claim that Johnson & Johnson's talcum powder caused cancer, igniting debates on ingredient safety, product transparency and corporate accountability, affecting consumer trust globally.

6. Apple iPhone "Batterygate" (2017)

Apple admitted slowing down older iPhones to prevent battery failures without informing users. The lack of transparency sparked consumer backlash and discussions about ethical practices and the right to information.

7. Wells Fargo Fake Accounts Scandal (2018)

Wells Fargo employees secretly created millions of unauthorized accounts to meet sales targets, leading to consumer fraud, loss of trust, fines, and reforms in banking practices aimed at protecting consumers.

8. CADBURY WORM CONTROVERSY (2003)

In October 2003, two consumers from Mumbai discovered live worms inside Dairy Milk chocolate bars. More such complaints surfaced, making it a nationwide alarm. Cadbury initially claimed that the infestation didn't occur during manufacturing, but was the result of improper storage by retailers in hot, humid conditions. However, the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began investigating. They seized stocks from both Pune factory and local retailers. Their findings pointed towards packaging flaws - making it possible for worms to enter the bars before even reaching the stores. Media channels broadcasted it across the country. People began losing trust and sales dropped. To handle crisis, Cadbury launched a recovery plan:

1. They invested ₹15 crore to introduce new packaging with double-layered metallic ~~env~~ wrappers for better protection.
2. Cadbury launched "Project Vishwas".
3. They visited over 190,000 retailers to educate them on proper storage methods.
4. Cadbury brought in Amitabh Bachchan as their face of damage-control ad campaign.

With powerful messaging around "purity and trust", Cadbury slowly rebuilt its image.

Worms found in Cadbury chocolate

SWOOP | Govt orders seizure of Dairy Milk stocks in State

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 3

CADBURY India was faced with a public-relations nightmare on Friday when worms were found in a Dairy Milk chocolate bar in the western suburb of Andheri.

This is just a week after five worms were found in chocolates of the same brand in a cooperative store in Akurdi, Pune. Acting on a complaint from a consumer, the State Food and Drugs Administration began seizing stocks of Dairy Milk chocolates.

"I ordered seizure of the Dairy Milk brand all over the State after the case was brought to my notice," FDA commissioner Uttam Khobragade told the Indian Express.



"The chocolate was manufactured at the Talegaon plant of the company. Hence, I have ordered the officers to seize all Dairy Milk stock from that plant," Khobragade said.

This is the same plant that had manufactured the chocolates in which worms were found in Pune, Cadbury India said the infestation could have come during storage.

"Chocolates are vulnerable to infestation if they are stored near grains and cereals or unhygienic conditions," said a statement issued by company spokesperson Parveen Vasaigara. "The company, therefore, retailers with storage dispensers to give adequate product saigara said. "Additionally, C.



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CONCLUSION

Consumer awareness is a powerful tool that protects individuals from unfair practices and exploitation. Throughout the project, we learned who consumers are and why understanding consumers' rights and responsibilities is vital for every buyer. The Consumer Protection laws and the role of courts ensure that consumers have access to justice when faced with unfair treatment. Quality Certifications and Standard marks help consumers identify safe and quality products. Various institutions like schools and media play a crucial role in spreading consumer awareness, empowering people to make informed choices. Students, in particular, can become smart consumers by staying alert and questioning product claims. Real-life case studies reveal the importance of being cautious and highlight the consequences of negligence by companies. Overall, an aware and responsible consumer base encourages better business ethics, ensures safety, and promotes a fair marketplace. When consumers are educated and vigilant, it leads to a healthier economy and protects everyone's interests.

"Empowered consumers shape a better world."



BONUS - When Consumers Are Aware:

- They compare prices before buying to avoid overpaying.
- They avoid falling for misleading ads or fake offers.
- They demand proper receipts and bills for purchases.
- They read the terms and conditions before signing contracts or making payments.
- They check the weight, quantity and MRP before buying packaged goods.
- They identify genuine certification marks like ISI, AGMARK, FSSAI, etc.
- They ask questions about the product's quality, warranty, and return policy.
- They raise complaints when they face exploitation or defective service.
- They think critically and do not get influenced by peer pressure or flashy branding.
- They verify credibility of online sellers and apps before making digital payments.
- They encourage others to be alert and aware.
- They support ethical businesses and avoid black-market products.
- They make use of helpline numbers like NCH.
- They know how and when to approach courts.

VOICE



S

SPECIFY



M

MEASURE



A

ANALYZE



R

RECEIPT & RETURNS



T

THINK

CONSUMER

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Educart

YouTube

Department of Consumer Affairs

NCERT textbook

THANK

YOU

FOR
READING.

