

# A Study of Consumer Right Awareness Among Students in South Mumbai

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**Abstract-** *Each of us is a consumer. We consume different commodities and services right from our birth to death. It is very important that the consumer must be aware regarding his right and available legal measures against exploitation. With the growth of E-commerce there is a greater need for consumers to know their rights and exercise them effectively. When the consumer awareness will rise among public especially among young generation, sellers and producers would be forced to get quality products with better performance, thereby leading to better economy and growth of India in the coming years*

*The present study is an attempt to probe into the awareness level of the students in various colleges in South Mumbai about their consumer rights. This study employs convenience sampling techniques. Primary data was collected from the sample of 215 respondents. The data was analysed using simple frequency, percentages, Wilk's Lambda test by using Microsoft Excel and SPSS software. The analysis indicates that there is no significant relationship between age and consumer rights awareness among students in South Mumbai. Thus, there is no significant difference in consumer rights awareness level of the student pursuing various courses.*

**Key Words-** *Consumers, exploitation, awareness, students*

## INTRODUCTION

Although consumer education is one of the essential rights recognized by the Consumer Protection Act, consumer awareness in India is still lacking. Consumers in India are victims of exploitation in the form of defective goods, deficiency in services, adulteration of food, misleading advertisement, false promises, exorbitant prices, unfair trade practices, Higher the consumer awareness, lower the exploitation. But due to various issues such as, apathy of general public specially youth of the country, lack of trust about law among today's young generation, also the fear among people about procedure to be followed for filing complaints etc, the level of

awareness about consumer rights and responsibilities is very low in India It is imperative that we increase consumer awareness and provide consumer education, particularly to our nation's youth. Thus, the objective of the current study is to ascertain the students' level of awareness about their right as consumer in order to provide insightful recommendations that will raise their awareness and motivate them to exercise their rights.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S Tamilmani (2016) studied consumer awareness of rights in Coimbatore, using surveys and secondary sources. From 150 respondents, less than half had neutral knowledge about hazardous goods (32%), quality (41%), choice (38%), decision-making (40%), and redressal (38%). Consumer education awareness was at 47%. Despite strong Indian laws, the actual consumer awareness was low. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, was noted as the most significant law.

Dr. P.L. Savithree et. al. (2024) studied consumer rights awareness among 100 college students in Madurai, using a Google Forms questionnaire and secondary sources. Findings indicated knowledge about consumer protection laws and rights. The study concluded that age significantly influenced opinions on consumer rights awareness, while personal variables like gender, age, family size, education, occupation, and income significantly impacted perceptions of consumer rights.

Kangkana Chaudhury (2015) aimed to assess consumer awareness among college students in Assam. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The results showed low awareness, with many students not knowing they are consumers. Few checked product details like ingredients or quality marks. The study suggested including the Consumer

Protection Act, 1986, in the curriculum to raise awareness. Despite government efforts, widespread ignorance persisted, leading to consumer exploitation. Charles Makanyeza, et. al (2021) examined how consumer rights awareness influenced consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in Zimbabwe's hotel industry. It found that awareness positively affected both attitudes and intentions, with education further strengthening these effects. Gender and age did not have a moderating impact. The study suggested more research in different sectors and countries to improve understanding, as results might vary due to personal preferences, income levels, and cultural differences. Dr. G. Nedumaran, et. al. (2019) reviewed consumer rights and protections in India and analyzed consumer awareness among college students at Alagappa University. Data was collected from 150 students using questionnaires and secondary sources. The study concluded that consumers faced high prices and low-quality products due to shortages and deceptive advertisements. It suggested improving awareness to help consumers make better choices.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of awareness regarding consumer rights among college students in South Mumbai.
2. To evaluate the influence of age on the awareness of consumer rights among students in South Mumbai.
3. To analyse the impact of degree courses which students are pursuing, on their awareness level.
4. To provide useful suggestions to raise awareness in light of the findings of the study.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches to know the awareness level among college students in South Mumbai. It covers the literature on various consumer rights in India. Research journals and previously published articles are examined in addition to the main survey. In addition, some statistical data is considered in order to reach the conclusion.

The target population for this study consisted of students studying in various colleges in South

Mumbai. The study employed convenience sampling and judgmental sampling as sub-techniques.

#### Target Population

Students enrolled in colleges in South Mumbai were the target population for the purposes of this study.

#### Sample Technique

This study used a convenience sampling technique, which is a non-probability sampling technique.

#### Sample Size

For the purposes of the study, a sample of 215 students enrolled in colleges in South Mumbai were chosen.

#### HYPOTHESIS

##### Hypothesis 1

H0- There is no significant association between age of the student and consumer rights awareness

H1- There is significant association between age of the student and consumer rights awareness.

##### Hypothesis 2

H0- There is no significant difference in consumer rights awareness level of the students pursuing various courses.

H1- There is a significant difference in consumer rights awareness level of the students pursuing various courses.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help us to understand the level of awareness among students studying in colleges in south Mumbai. It will also help us to understand the influence of gender on the awareness of consumer rights among college students in South Mumbai.

#### LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study is to analyse awareness level, which can vary as time passes. It's possible that the respondents of the study may not have honestly answered the survey questions. The application of the results of the present investigation cannot be validated across India because it was restricted to colleges in South Mumbai. It was challenging to make significant inferences and conclusions because the sample size was small in comparison to the population and was based on a convenient sampling method.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Distribution of the respondents based on their age is depicted in the table below

Table 1

Age Wise classification of the Respondent		
Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-18	66	30.70
18-22	144	66.98
22-24	5	2.33
Total	215	100.00

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

The age distribution of the respondents indicates that the majority of participants fall within the 18-22 age group, accounting for 66.98% of the total sample. A significant portion, 30.70%, belongs to the younger 15-18 age category. Only a small fraction, 2.33%, of respondents are in the 22-24 age range. Overall, the data highlights that the primary demographic of the study consists of individuals aged 18-22, with a smaller representation from both younger and slightly older age groups. The total number of respondents is 215, ensuring a well-rounded perspective within this age spectrum.

Table 2

Awareness Level of the Respondents about Consumer Protection Act		
Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage
Fully Aware	67	31.16
Partly Aware	133	61.86
Unaware	15	6.98
Total	215	100

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

The awareness level of the respondents reveals that a majority, 61.86%, are partly aware, indicating moderate familiarity with the Consumer Protection Act. A smaller portion, 31.16%, are fully aware, demonstrating a high level of understanding. Meanwhile, 6.98% of the respondents are unaware, showing little to no knowledge. This distribution suggests that while most respondents possess some level of awareness, only a third are fully knowledgeable, with a minority being completely unaware. The total number of respondents surveyed is 215.

Table No. 3

Awareness Level of the Respondents with respect to Specific Rights				
Rights	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Right to safety.	195	97.5	5	2.5
Right to safety.	195	97.5	5	2.5
Right to be informed	185	92.5	15	7.5
Right to consumer education	187	93.5	13	6.5
Right to be heard	187	93.5	13	6.5
Right to Seek redressal	152	76	48	24

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

The awareness level of respondents regarding specific consumer rights shows a high level of understanding across most categories. The "Right to Safety" is recognized by 97.5% of respondents, with only 2.5% being unaware. The "Right to be Informed" is known by 92.5%, while 7.5% are unfamiliar with it. Similarly, 93.5% of respondents are aware of both the "Right to Consumer Education" and the "Right to be Heard," with only 6.5% unaware. However, awareness of the "Right to Seek Redressal" is lower, with 76% of respondents knowledgeable, while 24% are unaware. Overall, the data shows strong awareness across most rights, with a notable gap in understanding of the redressal process.

Table No. 4

Source of Information		
Source	Frequency	Percentage
Friends / Peers / Relatives	74	37
Internet	122	61
College Curriculum and School Curriculum	156	78
Government awareness Programmes/ Government Offices	38	19
Newspaper	35	17.5
T.V. & Radio	35	17.5
NGOs	14	7

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

The data on the sources of information used by respondents reveals that educational institutions play the most significant role, with 78% gaining their knowledge through college or school curricula. The internet is the second most prominent source, utilized by 61% of respondents. Friends, peers, and relatives

provide information for 37% of participants. Government awareness programs and offices are a source for 19%, while newspapers, TV, and radio are each referenced by 17.5%. NGOs serve as a source of information for only 7% of respondents. This highlights the critical role of formal education and online platforms in disseminating information, while traditional media and governmental or NGO channels play a smaller role in comparison.

Inferential Analysis

Table No. 5-Hypothesis Testing

Multivariate Tests <sup>c</sup>							
Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.546	41.560 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	207.000	.000	.546
	Wilks' Lambda	.454	41.560 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	207.000	.000	.546
	Hotelling's Trace	1.205	41.560 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	207.000	.000	.546
	Roy's Largest Root	1.205	41.560 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	207.000	.000	.546
Age	Pillai's Trace	.046	.813	12.000	416.000	.638	.023
	Wilks' Lambda	.954	.813 <sup>a</sup>	12.000	414.000	.637	.023
	Hotelling's Trace	.047	.813	12.000	412.000	.637	.023
	Roy's Largest Root	.040	1.373 <sup>b</sup>	6.000	208.000	.227	.038

a. Exact statistic  
 b. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.  
 c. Design: Intercept + Age

The Wilk's Lambda significance value of 0.637 which is greater than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is no significant association between age of the student and consumer rights awareness.

Table No. 6

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Age	Which of the following Rights are you aware about? [Right to safety.]	.761	2	.381	1.379	.254	.013
	[Right to choose]	.441	2	.220	.794	.454	.007
	[Right to be informed]	.235	2	.117	.381	.684	.004
	[Right to consumer education]	.783	2	.391	1.304	.274	.012
	[Right to be heard]	.419	2	.210	.694	.501	.007
	[Right to Seek redressal]	.221	2	.111	.295	.745	.003

The above test determines that there is no significance relationship between age of the student and the right to safety. There is also no significant relation between right to choose and age of the student as the value of significance is 0.454 which is more than 0.05. Right to be informed has no significant association with the age

of the student as the p value is 0.684. The right to consumer education has no significant relationship with the age as the value of significance is 0.274 being greater than 0.05. The p value of 0.501 determines that there is no significance relationship between age of the student and the right to be heard. The right to seek redressal has no significant relationship with the age of the student as the value of significance is 0.754 being more than 0.05.

Table No. 7-Hypothesis Testing

Multivariate Tests <sup>b</sup>							
Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.336	17.550 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.000	.336
	Wilks' Lambda	.664	17.550 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.000	.336
	Hotelling's Trace	.506	17.550 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.000	.336
	Roy's Largest Root	.506	17.550 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.000	.336
Course which you are pursuing	Pillai's Trace	.041	1.494 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.182	.041
	Wilks' Lambda	.959	1.494 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.182	.041
	Hotelling's Trace	.043	1.494 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.182	.041
	Roy's Largest Root	.043	1.494 <sup>a</sup>	6.000	208.000	.182	.041

a. Exact statistic  
 b. Design: Intercept + Course which you are pursuing

The Wilk's Lambda significance value of 0.182 which is greater than 0.05 indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in consumer rights awareness level of the student pursuing various courses.

Table 8

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Course which you are pursuing	Which of the following Rights are you aware about?	.930	1	.930	3.392	.067	.016
	[Right to safety.]	.680	1	.680	2.470	.117	.011
	[Right to be informed]	.961	1	.961	3.168	.077	.015
	[Right to consumer education]	1.871	1	1.871	6.375	.012	.029
	[Right to be heard]	.901	1	.901	3.022	.084	.014
	[Right to Seek redressal]	1.836	1	1.836	5.022	.026	.023

The above table describes the significance of the awareness among the students of each consumer right based on the courses pursued by them. The p value of 0.067 determines that there is no significance relationship between courses pursued by the student and the right to safety. There is also no significant relation between right to choose and courses pursued

by the student as the value of significance is 0.117 which is less than 0.05. Right to be informed has no significant association with the courses pursued by the student as the p value is 0.077. The right to consumer education has a significant relationship with the courses offered as the value of significance is 0.012 being less than 0.05. The p value of 0.084 determines that there is no significance relationship between courses pursued by the student and the right to be heard. The right to seek redressal has a significant relationship with the courses offered as the value of significance is 0.012 being less than 0.05.

#### SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study could serve as a foundation for further research projects in the future. The following can be proposed as the scope of the next study:

1. To generalize the findings, the consumer awareness research might be expanded to include more states or cities.
2. Additional demographic information may be included in future studies, and the investigation may be expanded to include all age groups.
3. Further research regarding exercise of consumer rights by consumers of all age group can also be carried on by the researcher.

#### CONCLUSION

According to the study, just 31.16 percent of respondents are fully aware about the Consumer Protection Act. According to data on the information sources utilised by participants, college or school curriculum are the most important source of information (78% of respondents obtained their knowledge from college or school curricula). Strong efforts must be made by the government to raise consumer awareness. The analysis indicates that there is no significant relationship between age and consumer rights awareness among students in South Mumbai. Also, there is no significant difference in consumer rights awareness level of the student pursuing various courses.

True consumer empowerment is possible only when each consumer is completely aware of his/ her rights. Furthermore, merely raising consumer awareness of their rights won't satisfy a real need until those rights are actually exercised in the true letter and spirit.

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