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THE STUDY OF AWARENESS ABOUT CONSUMER RIGHTS REGARDING ONLINE SHOPPING IN NAGPUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT:

Various laws have been made for consumer protection, as a result of which the consumer has become dependent on the government today. Those who do illegal work, get political protection. Since consumers are not organized, they are cheated everywhere. The consumer movement starts from here. The consumer must wake up and protect himself. Nowadays, the sale of counterfeit goods is emerging as a major problem due to the increasing trend of online shopping. Customers should also show readiness to complain in the Consumer Forum in case of any problem regarding the ordered goods. For this, it is necessary not to follow only the formalities of celebrating Consumer Day. The government has also made the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 for online shoppers. On receipt of any consumer complaint, now the e-business company will have to accept that complaint within forty-eight hours and dispose of it within a month. In this research paper, the awareness of consumer rights regarding online shopping in the Nagpur district has been studied.



Various laws have been made for consumer protection, as a result of which the consumer has become dependent on the government today. Those who do illegal work, get political protection. Since consumers are not organized, they are cheated everywhere. The consumer movement starts from here. The consumer must wake up and protect himself. Nowadays, the sale of counterfeit goods is emerging as a major problem due to the increasing trend of online shopping. Customers should also show readiness to complain in the Consumer Forum in case of any problem regarding the ordered goods. For this, it is necessary not to follow only the formalities of celebrating Consumer Day. The government has also made the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 for online shoppers. On receipt of any consumer complaint, now the e-business company will have to accept that complaint within forty-eight hours and dispose of it within a month. In this research paper, the awareness of consumer rights regarding online shopping in the Nagpur district has been studied.

KEYWORDS: Online Shopping, Consumer, Awareness, Consumer Rights, Consumer Protection.

INTRODUCTION:

Consumer protection measures help in empowering consumers by giving them the information they need to make informed decisions about their purchases. When consumers are protected, they can exercise their rights to demand quality products and services and also seek compensation in case they receive substandard products or services. Consumer protection laws help prevent fraudulent activities such as false advertising, misleading labeling, and price manipulation. This not only protects the consumers but also promotes fair competition in the market. Consumer protection measures help reduce health and safety risks associated with the use of products and services. For example, regulations on food products, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices help ensure that they meet minimum safety standards. Ensuring consumer protection can promote economic development by creating a level playing field for businesses to compete fairly. This can lead to an increase in consumer confidence in the market, leading to an increase in spending, investment, and job creation.

December 24 is celebrated as 'National Consumer Day' in India to increase productivity and quality-related awareness of the consumer and protect the interests of the consumer by informing people about consumer laws because consumers are protected from exploitation. The Consumer Protection Act-1986 was enacted on December 24, 1986, to save. After this, amendments were made to this act in 1991 and 1993. Recently the three decades old Consumer Protection Act, of 1986 has been replaced. It has been replaced by the Consumer Protection Act, of 2019. In the new law, several steps have been taken in the interest of the consumers. The loopholes in the old rules have been removed. It

aims to protect the interests of consumers by better-addressing issues related to misleading advertisements, digital transactions, and e-commerce. The bill provides that if a manufacturer or service provider makes a false or misleading advertisement that is against the interest of the consumer, he can be punished with imprisonment of up to two years and a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh. In case of a repeat offence, the amount of the fine will be up to Rs 50 lakh and the term of imprisonment will be up to five years.

Undoubtedly, the enactment of the law has come under the ambit of consumer rights. Under this the consumer has the right to be represented in various forums designed to consider his interests, the right to redress against unfair trade practices or exploitation of consumers, the right to acquire knowledge and skills to become an informed consumer, the right to Right to raise voice, Right to be protected against marketing of goods and services which are harmful to life and property, Right to be informed about the quantity, quality, purity, potency, standard, and price of goods or services, as the case may be rights have been obtained. At the same time, a provision has also been made for the consumer to fight the case in the consumer courts and get justice if defects are found in the goods and services.

Consumer protection measures help in maintaining the basic rights of consumers, such as the Right to be informed, the Right to choose, the Right to safety, and the Right to be heard (Right to be heard). These rights are necessary for building a fair and just society.

The pendency of consumer cases in India is very high with cases pending both at the state and national levels. This results in long waiting periods and delays in dispute resolution which frustrates consumers. As of December 2022, 1,12,000 cases were pending with the State Commissions while 4,29,000 cases were pending with the District Commissions. The pendency rate for 1,06,088 cases registered with the National Commission was 20.5%, while it was 22% for 35 state and 637 district commissions.

A study conducted by the 'National Council of Applied Economic Research' (NCAER) found that only 18% of consumers who lodged complaints with a company received a satisfactory resolution, while the rest either did not get a response or were Not satisfied with the reply received. Many consumers in India are not aware of their rights and legal procedures for seeking redressal. This makes it difficult for them to knock on the door of the consumer forum and demand justice. The business sector in India has been quite slow in adopting consumer-centric policies and participating in dispute-resolution mechanisms. This limits the effectiveness of consumer protection laws and slows down the resolution of consumer complaints.

Research Methodology:

This research is based on the survey method.

Objectives of the research:

- 1) To study the awareness about consumer rights regarding online shopping in Nagpur district.
- 2) To study the history and present form of the Consumer Protection Act.
- 3) Based on the findings of the research, giving suggestions to increase awareness about consumer rights regarding online shopping in Nagpur district.

Research Hypothesis:

H₀: There is no awareness about consumer rights regarding online shopping in the Nagpur district.

H₁: There is awareness about consumer rights regarding online shopping in the Nagpur district.

Data Collection Method:

In this research, information has been collected from primary and secondary sources. For primary information, information has been collected through a questionnaire from 200 respondents from the research area. Literature related to the subject has been reviewed for secondary information.

Sampling:

Information has been collected through a questionnaire from 200 respondents from Nagpur district by simple random sampling method.

Awareness about Consumer Rights Regarding Online Shopping in Nagpur District:

With the advent of computers and mobiles in today's life, the whole scenario of buying goods and services has changed. Consumers can buy any item or service anywhere in the world with a handheld mobile phone. With the advent of this e-commerce facility, our lives have completely changed. Most of the things we are buying online in our everyday life. But with this some dangers have also been added, to avoid which we need to be extra careful.

E-commerce companies should have a refund or return policy, but there is no clear provision in any law that there should be a return policy. It also depends on the object. However, if there is any deficiency, the consumer is protected under the Consumer Protection Act and can get compensation for the same. The delivery time of the order depends on the location and availability of the item with the company and the shipping system. This is usually announced by the company on the website at the time of sale. There can also be changes in this. But it cannot be too long. If anyone suffers an immediate or material loss due to delayed delivery of the product, he can file a case in the consumer forum and get compensation under the Consumer Protection Act. The complaint can be lodged offline or online. Always check MRP while buying products online. Must check and compare with offline prices. Avoid soliciting calls or e-mail messages from anyone asking for consumer personal information.

According to a survey conducted by Velocity MR, one out of every three customers who have ordered goods online has received a defective item in the last six months. Similarly, according to the survey of Local Service, 38 percent of the people say that they have received one or other fake defective goods from the e-commerce site within a year. In this situation, a guideline should be declared which would prove to be able to set rules for online selling companies so that consumers can avoid cheating.

If you want to make a complaint online, you can call the National Consumer Helpline toll-free number 1800-11-4000 or 14404 or 1915. You can register your complaint through NCH (National Consumer Helpline) mobile application.

The Company must immediately replace any Product found to be damaged or in poor condition. Should listen to consumer complaints and provide satisfactory solutions. A separate arrangement should be made on the website of company for the consumers to contact the company or register complaints. Every organization should have a toll-free number for consumers to call and discuss their problems. Having a Customer Service Officer to attend to the problems of the customers promptly.

There should be a transparent and convenient exchange policy.

If the consumer has bought a mobile online and the company has sent some other goods instead of the mobile to the consumer's address, then the company will have to replace the mobile again. If the company does not do this, then by resorting to consumer law, you can get your money or goods back.

If the consumer has bought a mobile or any other item by shopping online and it is defective or has received any other item from the online company, then the consumer can take the help of the law to get the correct item or amount back. For this, the Indian Parliament has enacted the Consumer Protection Act in 1986. Under this, every consumer has the right to get the goods he has bought by paying money, in perfect condition. Apart from this, if there is any fault in it during the period of warranty or guarantee, then it should be repaired or replaced with a new one.

If any shopkeeper, supplier, or company gives defective goods or services to the consumer, then it must be repaired or replaced immediately. Apart from this, if the consumer did online shopping and got some other item from the company, then it will be the responsibility of the company to replace it. Suppose a consumer has bought a mobile by visiting an online site and the company has sent a stone instead of the mobile to the consumer's address, then the company will have to exchange the mobile again.

If the company does not do this, then the consumer can complain in the consumer forum. In the Consumer Protection Act 1986, three-tier consumer courts have been set up to hear such cases. If the

consumer has complained about any matter in the District Consumer Forum and is not satisfied with its decision, then the consumer can go to the State Consumer Commission and then to the National Consumer Commission.

One who has bought any goods or services by paying money. If any deficiency is found in the service or goods, then he can file a case. However, if someone buys goods or services to sell them, he cannot file a case under this law. This means that if a retailer buys any goods from a wholesaler, he will not be considered a consumer under this law and cannot file a case. Any company that has bought goods or any service and is consuming it himself or his employees, can file a case under this law. If the customer cancels the order while shopping online, then the companies cannot charge any kind of extra charge from the customer. Apart from this, if a defective or wrong product is delivered to the customer, then in this situation the customer has the right that the customer can also apply for a refund by returning the product. But the customer should know whether the website from which the customer is doing online shopping has a facility for return or refund of the product or not. If the customer registers a complaint related to the product, the company will have to respond within 48 hours. On the other hand, if the e-commerce company delivers a product late than the scheduled date, then in this situation the customer has the right to return the product. The customer does not need to pay any extra charge for this.

Consumers can claim compensation if they receive the wrong product. Online shopping disputes are also under the ambit of consumer law. While shopping, we usually do not take care of many things. Especially when shopping offline. We must pay for this by paying more money than the actual price and defective goods. Many times, such cases have come to the fore where the shopkeepers charge more money than the MRP rate by giving substandard products to the customers. For this, the consumer needs to be more careful while shopping.

Total number of members in the consumer family Nagpur district, 36% of the members in the consumer family are more than 5 members. The number of members in 55% of consumer families is less than 5 members. The number of members in the 9% of consumer families is more than 7 members. The number of members in the maximum consumer family in the Nagpur district is less than 5 members. Total family income of consumer families in Nagpur district, 31% of consumer family income is less than 5 lakh and more than 2 lacks. 58% of consumer family income is less than 2 lakhs. 11% of consumer family income is more than 5 lakhs. The income of the maximum consumer family in Nagpur district is less than 2 lakhs. Of the age of respondent consumers in Nagpur district who shop online, 47% of consumers aged between 18 to 25. 25% of the consumer age is between 25 to 35. 28% of consumers are over 35. 73% of consumer respondents check the prices of goods purchased from alternative sources. 27% of consumer respondents do not check the prices of goods purchased from alternative sources. 62% of the consumers' M.R.P. (Maximum Retail Price) View products before purchasing. 38% of the respondent's consumer M.R.P. (Maximum Retail Price) Do not view products before purchasing. In Nagpur district, offline shopping is most preferred over online shopping as 45% of respondents prefer consumer product experience, 20% of respondents prefer personalized attention and recommendations, and 35% of respondents prefer easy returns.

In Nagpur district, 46% of the respondent consumers have seen food adulteration. 54% of the respondent consumers have not seen adulteration in food items. 62% of the respondents who have seen food adulteration have complained to the shopkeeper. 33% of consumers have complained to the main supplier. 1% of the user has complained to internet consumer forum. 4% of the consumer has complained elsewhere. 12% of consumer complaints were addressed to the satisfaction of the consumer. 88% of consumer complaints were not addressed to the satisfaction of the consumer. 44% of consumers in the Nagpur district are aware of the Consumer Protection Act, which deals with consumer complaints. 56% of consumers are not aware of this Consumer Protection Act. 69% of consumers in the Nagpur district do not know about consumer courts, which deal with consumer complaints. 31% of the consumers are aware of the consumer courts. Only 5% of the consumer respondents have filed a case in the consumer court. 95% of the consumer respondents have not filed any case in the consumer court.

Most of the consumers in the city are not aware of the consumer protection act, which means the awareness level of consumer rights concerning online shopping is low in the Nagpur district.

If the consumer cancels the order while doing online shopping in Nagpur district, then the company has taken extra charge from 43% of consumers. In Nagpur district, 33% of the consumers have returned the product and applied for a refund after the defective or wrong product was delivered. 47% of consumers have received a response from the company within 48 hours of registering a product-related complaint. 12% of the consumers in the district were not forced to buy any goods or services. 27% of consumers are aware of consumer rights related to online shopping. 43% of consumers are aware of the benefits of e-commerce shopping. Only 19% of consumers are aware of the precautions to be taken while shopping online. 7% of consumers in the Nagpur district are aware of the refund policy for e-commerce companies. Only 13% of the consumers see the reviews of the website, manufacturer, or sender i.e., seller, and get complete information about it. 71% of consumers always choose cash-on-delivery payment options.

If any e-commerce platform or any company from which the customer has purchased the goods does not give the right product to the customer in exchange for the wrong product, then the customer can complain in the consumer forum. In the Consumer Protection Act, consumer courts have been set up at three levels to hear such cases. The customer has the right to choose any goods and services. The customer can choose the service or goods of his choice on any e-commerce platform. No customer is bound to take any goods or services.

CONCLUSION:

Consumer protection is an important aspect of modern economies, aimed at protecting the rights of consumers against unfair trade practices and ensuring a fair and efficient dispute resolution mechanism. As one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, India has made remarkable progress in consumer protection where the legal framework for consumer rights has been strengthened through the Consumer Protection Act 2019. However, despite these policy efforts and grievance redressal mechanisms, the overall time taken to resolve consumer complaints is still a major challenge in India, where many pending cases remain. This situation of delay of cases in the dispute redressal system causes mental, financial, and emotional difficulties to the consumers and hence there is a need for re-imagining or redesigning the present dispute resolution framework. There is also an urgent need to reduce the arbitrariness of procedural, appropriate, and process brokers in the system to solve the problem of pendency in the Nagpur district. Many Consumer Forums and Commissions lack the necessary infrastructure and manpower to effectively deal with many cases. This leads to delays in the disposal of cases, which otherwise could have been disposed of expeditiously. There are several grievance redressal mechanisms in place for Nagpur district, they often suffer from inefficiency and do not effectively address consumer complaints. Consumers in the district often do not know how to use these systems or are unaware of them. As a consumer, the consumer has got many rights but many people in the district are not aware of these rights.

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