



## ASSESSMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW FOR JUVENILE CONSUMERS IN SEONI

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### ABSTRACT:

Consumer rights are considered as the basic human rights and its violation is considered as the violation of human rights. Ignorance and Awareness of consumers towards their rights is one of the most vital contributing factor which leads to poor consumer rights protection system in the country. Consumer plays a vital role in every economy of the world, because in the absence of effective demand that emanates from them, the whole economy will get virtually collapsed. A consumer is any person who engages in the process of spending money and using economic goods and services. It implies all human beings of this world at one or another time are called as consumers. Consumer protection means providing safeguards to protect consumer against unethical malpractices and unfair trade practices. In the 18th century, needs of the human being were very limited and these needs were met through exchange of goods i.e. barter system, but as the time elapsed people started using currency to fulfill their needs. Present era is the era of consumer service revolution. As per law, consumer has every right to accept or reject goods, without being cheated and exploited. But all this requires consumer awareness towards their rights. Present study "Assessment of Consumer Protection Law's for Juvenile Consumers in Seoni region of Madhya Pradesh are having low level of awareness and very low extent of utilization of available consumer rights. This study is conducted in the light of the existing legal framework for consumer protection available in India. This study is an attempt to measure the degree or level of awareness of consumers towards their legitimate rights and also to identify the grievances or problems and challenges faced by the consumers along with their redressal mechanism. For this study the primary data from 100 respondents is collected by using convenient sampling method besides the available secondary data. This study will be helpful in developing an action plan based on setting a campaign in motion, sufficiency of legal and constitutional provisions and solutions to the problems and challenges of consumers.



**KEY WORDS:** Awareness, Consumer Rights, Consumer Protection, Seoni.

### INTRODUCTION

Consumer protection refers to the legal framework that ensures fair interaction between goods and services providers and consumers. A consumer protection framework includes three aspects. Firstly, the laws and regulations governing relation between goods and service provider and users. Secondly, the enforcement mechanism and finally, the consumer awareness. The recent studies highlighted the shortcomings in the available legal framework. Lack of effective disclosure and attractive and deceptive advertising leads to deception of consumer. This study is basically the action plan recommended to provide protection to the consumers. Consumer rights are considered as the

basic human rights as per constitution as a part of Right to life. But unfortunately, in our country a majority of the consumers themselves are not aware of the rights. The reasons may be illiteracy, compromising attitude, have less voice, illegal practices and so on. Infrastructure facilities, food operations and controls, sanitation and maintenance of establishments, personal hygiene, and other aspects of personal hygiene are included in the general standards that have been stated. In addition, the Regulations stipulate certain hygienic and sanitary procedures that are to be adhered to by FBOs that are engaged in the manufacturing, processing, storage, and marketing of milk and milk products.

Food safety is an essential component in the process of preserving the reputation of a firm that manufactures food ingredients. It is possible for contaminated food items to be sold on the market if an appropriate food safety practice is not put into place. There is the potential for significant interruptions to occur in the operations of the food production firm in the event that faulty food items are detected. Following that, the corporation was required to launch food recalls. Food recalls can result in significant financial losses for businesses. Furthermore, the most significant aspect is that it will have a detrimental influence on the reputation of your brand among the general public, which will have an effect that is long-lasting. It is possible that this is more expensive than the expense of doing food recalls. As a result, every firm that produces food should not give up on the issue of food safety. It is a significant investment that one must not pass the opportunity to make.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

In India more than 76 percent of the people are living in villages and 24 percent of the people are living in urban areas. The development of India depends on development of villages and that is possible only through the growth of agriculture and its allied activities. Rural population is always busy with their day to day activities; they did not find the time to know about their rights. There are backbone of Indian economy the most of the market. But, as a consumer, the rural and urban people do not have much awareness of their basic consumer protection rights. Hence, there is an urgent need for conduct a study to know about their level of awareness towards consumer protection rights and responsibilities. This regulated area for the researcher, hence, the present study has been undertaken to fill the gap. This study helps to the policy makers to protect the rural and urban consumers. In this context, consumer associations, various social groups and specially government has to take initiatives on behalf of the consumer to curb the exploitation.

### EFFECTIVENESS IN ENSURING FOOD SAFETY IN SEONI

In the Madhya Pradesh district of Seoni, food enterprises, local governments, regulatory agencies, and the society at large all have a part to play in ensuring food safety. This is a detailed analysis of how well they work to guarantee food safety:

#### 1. Regulatory Framework and Enforcement

- **FSSAI and Local Authorities:** The District Food Safety Department carries out the local implementation of national standards issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The speed and diligence of the local food safety authorities in conducting inspections and enforcing compliance are key factors that determine how successful these policies are in Seoni.
- **Inspections and Licensing:** It's crucial that food enterprises have regular licenses and inspections. The efficacy varies in Seoni. Thorough and frequent inspections are helpful in identifying and reducing hazards. However, the frequency and comprehensiveness of these inspections may be impacted by administrative difficulties and resource constraints.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To understand the level of consumer awareness regarding their rights and responsibilities.
2. To analyze the level of consumer awareness towards consumer protection measures.
3. To analyze the extent to which consumers approached various redressal agencies to resolve their issues.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE:-

In this section, the growth of consumer privileges, fundamental liberties, and protections for children is discussed. Sarwade (2002) conducted a study in Adul, Paithan and Sangvi villages of Marathwada region and author concluded that majority of the respondents owned consumer durables. More than half of the respondents owned television, radio, tape recorder, bicycle, fan, clock and wrist watch in all the three villages. Least percentage of them owned sofa, camera, motorcycle and sewing machine. Price was the most important factor which influenced the purchasing decision as against the quality of the product.

Gambhir (2002) conducted a study in Chandigarh revealed that 63.47 per cent bought packed goods and out of this only 36.53 per cent were satisfied and 67.59 per cent were not satisfied with the quality of packed products.

Mehrotra and Kaur (2004) conducted a study in three randomly selected urban localities namely Maya Nagar, Santi Nagar and B.R.S Nagar of Ludhiana city. They reported that attitude of the respondents towards electrical kitchen equipment was noted as 'time and energy saver' claimed highest mean score in the three localities viz., 3.80, 3.95 and 4.05, respectively, followed by 'easy to use' (3.76, 3.92 and 3.95, respectively). Price was the prime factor which affected the purchase in all the three localities followed by brand in Santi Nagar and B.R.S Nagar residence and durability was considered by Maya Nagar residence respondents.

Arvonne (2017) traced the development of ideas and action over the course of several centuries with the intention of establishing the human rights of women and putting into practice the concept that women and men are equal members of society. As soon as the Taliban assumed control in Afghanistan in 1994, they began removing girls from school, prohibiting women from working outside the house, and mandating that women wear clothing that completely covered their bodies.

French (2022) presented the corporations have the potential to be fully-fledged moral people, which means that they are entitled to the same benefits, rights, and responsibilities that are often assigned to moral individuals in the normal course of events. Within the framework of our tradition, there are three distinct conceptions of what makes personhood: the metaphysical, the moral, and the legal ideas. It is essential to differentiate between these three conceptualizations.

Margalit & Raz (2022) through this process, the grounds for the appropriate kind of group, an all-encompassing group, to decide whether or not a region should be self-governing were developed. The general acceptance of the existence of national rights to self-determination provides a welcome point of consensus in the disciplines of international law and international relations, which are both fraught with disagreement. In order to avoid any confusion, we will refer to the concept of self-government as the concept of national self-determination.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS:-

This research is based on adopting the both empirical and doctrinal resources. To gain in-depth understanding regarding the awareness of the consumers, empirical data has been randomly collected from 100 respondents of Seoni districts of Madhya Pradesh (India) by way of a questionnaire. The data is collected from both urban and rural consumers of both the districts. Doctrinal sources includes Books, Indian Journals, Published articles, Research papers, Government and Non-Government websites and various other notifications issued by the government in this context. Data has been analyzed empirically using Percentage method.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION:-

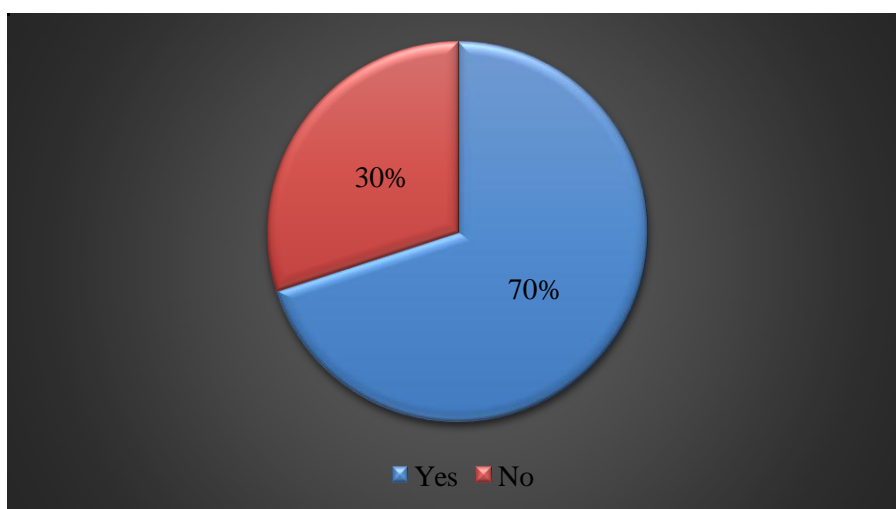
In the present study is a critical job that shopper security regulations play in safeguarding the privileges and interests of purchasers, particularly the freedoms and interests of adolescent clients. It is of the utmost importance in the district of Seoni, which is located in India, to guarantee that food products are safe for children to consume. A comparison and evaluation of the effectiveness of consumer protection legislation in Seoni with those in other countries is the primary emphasis of this analysis. The objective is to identify any gaps in protection and make suggestions for improvements.

This study aims to improve the protection of juvenile consumers in Seoni, particularly with regard to food safety, by analyzing the legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and awareness levels that are currently in place.

**1. Did you know that India's food safety regulations are outlined in the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSSA)?**

**Table 1: Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 Knowledge (FSSA)**

	Percentage
Yes	70%
No	30%
Total	100%



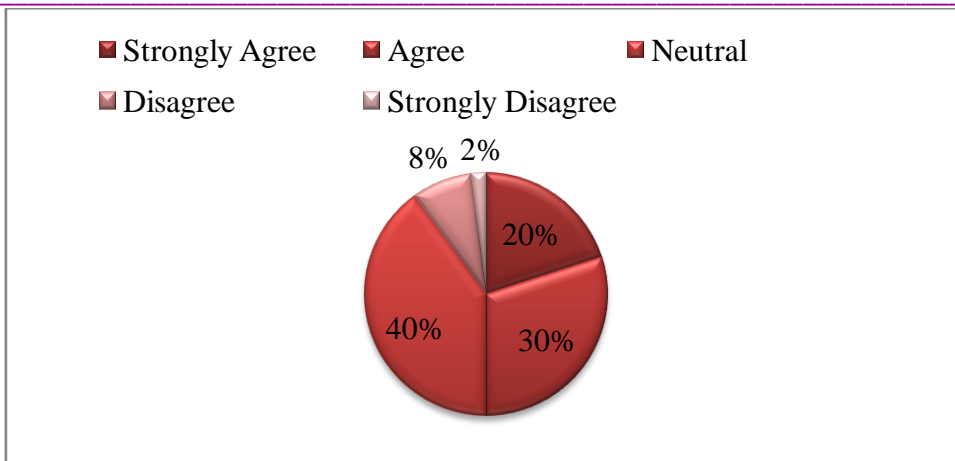
**Figure 1: Graphical presentation of the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006**

As per the information introduced in Table 1, over two thirds of the respondents who participated in the study know with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSSA), which is the piece of regulation that directs the safety of food in India. As a consequence of this, it appears that the population that was examined possessed a relatively high level of awareness. However, thirty percent of those who participated in the poll are unaware of this major regulation, which indicates that there is a demand for greater efforts to educate the general public about food safety standards.

**Do you think the current legal framework adequately protects juvenile consumers from unsafe food products?**

**Table 2: Perception of the Current Legal Framework in Protecting Juvenile Consumers**

	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20%
Agree	30%
Neutral	40%
Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	2%
Total	100%



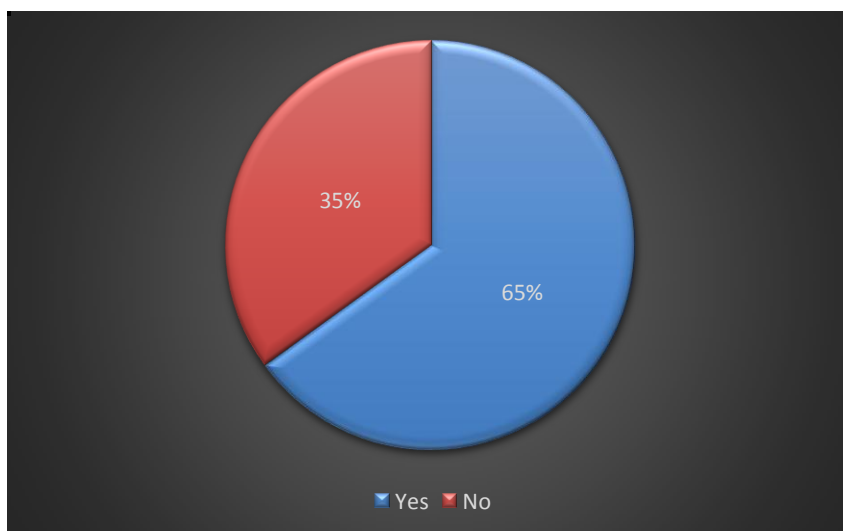
**Figure 2: Visual representation of the public's view of the existing legislative framework for the protection of underage consumers**

The opinions of the respondents are presented in table 2, which indicates their thoughts of the appropriateness of the existing legal framework in safeguarding juvenile consumers from consumption of dangerous food products. The majority of respondents, which accounts for fifty percent of the total, are either agreed or strongly agree that the existing legal framework is sufficient. With regards to the handiness of the ongoing legitimate system in guaranteeing food safety for juvenile shoppers, an extensive greater part of the populace (half) is either uninterested, dissents, or firmly can't help contradicting this assertion. This indicates that there is some level of scepticism or concern over the effectiveness of the legislative system. This indicates that there is a want for additional investigation as well as the possibility of adjustments to the legislative framework in order to address these concerns.

**Have you ever experienced or heard of a foodborne illness outbreak in your area?**

**Table 3: Experience or Awareness of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks**

	Percentage
Yes	65%
No	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



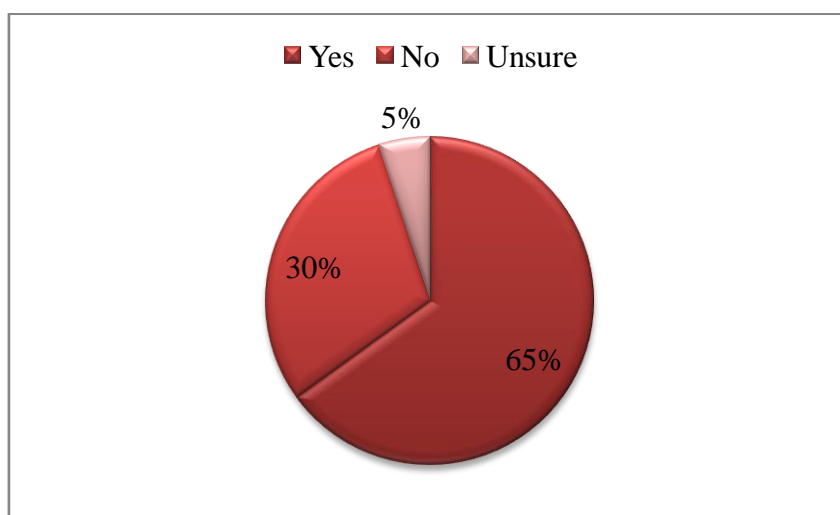
**Figure 3: Graphical presentation of Experience or Awareness of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks**

According to the data presented in the table, sixty-five percent of the individuals who participated in the survey have either personally experienced or heard of an outbreak of a foodborne illness in their region. This indicates that infections caused by foodborne pathogens are not uncommon in the area that was examined, which highlights the significance of implementing efficient food safety measures.

**Do you believe that stricter penalties should be imposed on food businesses that violate food safety standards, especially concerning products consumed by children?**

**Table 4: Support for Stricter Penalties on Violating Food Businesses**

	Percentage
Yes	65%
No	30%
Unsure	5%
Total	100%



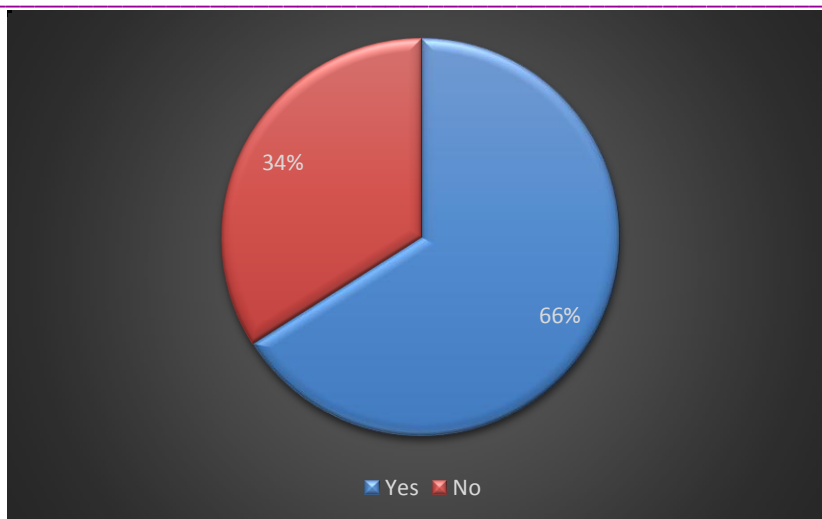
**Figure 4: Graphical presentation of Support for Stricter Penalties on Violating Food Businesses**

65 percent of respondents feel that stiffer penalties should be imposed on food businesses that violate food safety regulations. This indicates that there is a strong attitude on the necessity of enforcement against food businesses that violate food safety standards. On the other hand, thirty percent of respondents are against more stringent fines, and five percent are unclear, indicating that there is some disagreement regarding the most effective method of enforcing food safety rules.

**Are you aware of the licensing and registration requirements for food businesses under the FSSAI?**

**Table 5: Awareness of Licensing and Registration Requirements**

	Percentage
Yes	66%
No	34%
Total	100%



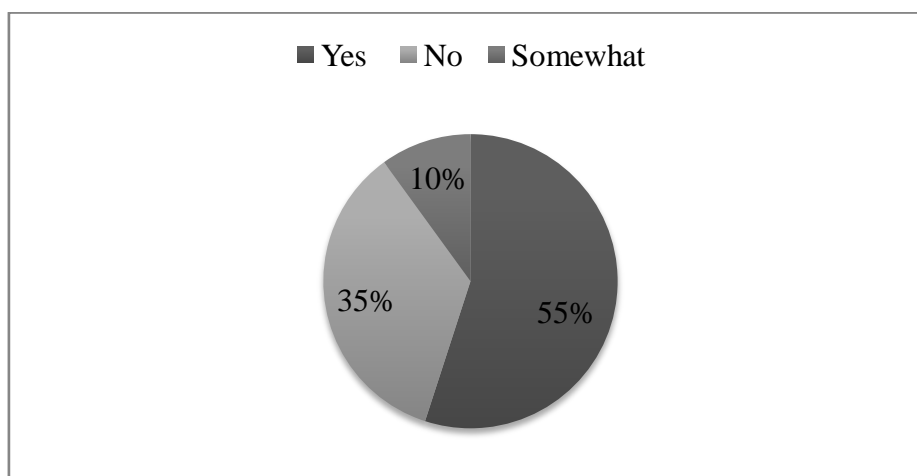
**Figure 5 : Graphical presentation of Awareness of Licensing and Registration Requirements**

According to the data presented in the table, sixty-six percent of the respondents are aware of the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA) requirements that require food businesses to obtain licences and register their enterprises. As a result, this suggests that the population that was surveyed possesses a rather high level of awareness. However, 34 percent of respondents are unaware of these regulations, which indicates that there is a need for additional efforts to educate the general public, particularly owners of food businesses, about their responsibilities under the Food Safety and Security Act (FSSA).

**Do you think there is enough awareness among juvenile consumers and their parents/guardians about food safety practices?**

**Table 6: Awareness of Food Safety Practices among Juvenile Consumers and Their Parents/Guardians**

	Percentage
Yes	55%
No	35%
Somewhat	10%
Total	100%



**Figure 6: Graphical presentation of Awareness of Food Safety Practices among Juvenile Consumers and Their Parents/Guardians**

According to the data presented in the table, fifty-five percent of respondents believe that there is sufficient awareness regarding food safety practices among juvenile consumers and their parents or guardians. This suggests that there is a moderate level of confidence in the awareness levels that are currently in place. On the other hand, 35 percent of respondents are of the opinion that there is not enough awareness, which indicates that there is a requirement for additional education and outreach activities to ensure that juvenile consumers and their parents or guardians are well-informed on safety measures regarding food. In addition, ten percent of respondents said they have some degree of uncertainty on the amount of awareness, which suggests that there is a requirement for additional research into the perceived gaps in knowledge.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN TO PROTECT CONSUMER RIGHTS

Government as well as various consumer groups should set a vision regarding protection of consumer rights. Government should take initiatives which will increase the awareness of the consumers regarding their rights, which certainly helps in curbing the malpractices and dishonesty. We recommend the action plan which is based on –

- As a feature of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, an optional convention on the job of the child as a consumer should be drafted, with the state being considered responsible for its implementation. Using the Optional Convention and numerous other monitoring systems, the Child Rights Board should make a move to determine the concerns of child consumers.
- It is important to strengthen the structure for international business and basic freedoms by carrying out specific measures for the reason for advancing corporate responsibility towards kid clients.
- The concept of youngster consumer should be consolidated utilizing factors, which incorporate, among other things, age, a singular's participation in the market as a passive member, and the impact of the child available force.
- There are various definitions that may be utilized, one of which is that a child consumer is any child who is more youthful than 18 years of age and who purchases, uses, or uses any product in any capacity, whether straightforwardly or by implication.
- A kid who is considered to be a right holder is any child who is within the scope of this definition. This child ought to be safeguarded from issues such as the safety of food and products, as well as the health risk that is caused by passive smoking.

### CONCLUSION

Our general public is one in which realism has turned into a fundamental part of human life, and we are living in this culture. Towards the end, we can say that protecting consumer rights is one of the most important issues for all developing countries. As in all developed nations, consumers enjoy their available rights. The main reason behind this is literacy while in developing countries the main reason is illiteracy and awareness. The consumer being the citizen of the state and country are entitled to be protected from the illegal business practices, but due to lack of awareness, lack of voice on the part of consumer and consumer associations, compromising attitude of the consumers, widespread corruption and violation of consumer rights, this is not possible. The need of the hour is that in order to protect consumer rights, consumer involvement should be encouraged, empowering consumer organizations and the most important is political commitment from government to ensure consumer protection through available legal framework and to make changes in the legal and constitutional framework as per the requirement. But above all is public participation, the government alone cannot protect consumers from malpractices, unfair trade practices and dishonesty. There are ample number of laws to take care of the consumer and is increasing as per the requirement. However, its effectiveness and execution much depends upon the alertness of the consumers and the sincerity of the actors and infrastructure.



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