



AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CONSUMER AWARENESS AMONG TEENAGERS

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Abstract

Purpose: In the country like India, which has a higher population rate and illiteracy rate, there is a great need to increase consumer awareness especially among teenagers. Consumer awareness plays a key role in decision making and benefits society by promoting customer satisfaction, increasing economic stability and creating realistic expectations. The benefits of consumer awareness of an individual include enhanced critical thinking, improved life skills and increased self-confidence. Legal and administrative machinery and consumer redressal system are working in our country under which the consumers can file a complaint in a consumer court and demand justice when they are cheated by the sellers or manufacturers of the products or services. The aim of this paper was to measure the level of consumer awareness among teenagers and also to know their perception about today's market.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The data were collected using a structured questionnaire as well as interview schedule. A total of 120 respondents was considered for the study. Chi-square test, weighted average score methods and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

Findings: The results indicate that teenagers are not fully aware of quality assurance marks on different products. Generally they check the information like price, expiry and manufacturing date, brand name, etc. given on the labels of the products. The research also indicates that male teenagers are more aware of consumer rights than female teenagers. Demographic variables like gender and age have no significant impact about the consumer awareness among teenagers. Brands, advertisements, and packaging play an important role in the shopping among teenagers.

Practical Utility: The outcomes of the study will help Indian policy makers to understand the level of consumer awareness among teenagers and to formulate policies to enhance consumer awareness among teenagers and other consumers also.

Keywords: Consumer awareness, consumer rights, quality assurance marks, marketing, shopping.

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INTRODUCTION

“The customer is the most important visitor in our premises; he is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is the part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so”, Mahatma Gandhi.

There is nobody in the world that is left out of the class of ‘consumers’. Immediately after a baby’s birth, there arises a need for baby foods, feeding bottles, oil cloth, garments, medicines, etc. and thus bringing the baby to consumers’ community. The consumer hood continues till one’s last breath in the world and even after new cloth and materials are bought for performing one’s funeral rites. The Consumer is said to be the pivot around which the entire business activities revolve. **“Consumer is the Sovereign”, “Consumer is King”, “Consumer can do no wrong”, “Consumer is always right”**, all of each catchphrases may speak high of consumers in the market of the past. But the fact remains that even in the so-called affluent and highly competitive economies, the consumer is not a king and in shortages economies like India’s which are virtually sellers’ market, he is nowhere near even a king without the “PRIVY PURSE”. Even, he has to be aware against the mechanization of the wily producer and the crooked seller.

Today’s market is flooded with very large numbers and varieties of goods and services. So it has become very difficult to know as to who is a genuine producer or seller? Similarly from among large varieties, it has become very difficult to know as to which one is genuine or which one is fake. Much information is deliberately hidden in certain advertisements to betray the consumers. Even the guarantee / warranty given by the producer is not honored. Weighing with unapproved weights is a very common practice of consumer exploitation which is prevalent among hawkers. The list of instances and kinds of exploitation through malpractices adopted by businessmen is a very long one. The consumer has to be an engineer, a chemist, a cost analyst, etc. all at the same time in order to protect himself from costly and substandard and often adulterated stuff that is sold to him in attractive containers with much advertised brand names. Therefore, it becomes very important for consumers to protect himself from the unfair trade practices of the traders and service providers who only think that their commercial establishment is only a place to earn more and more profits.



Every individual needs to be aware of their rights as a consumer. He should learn how to protect himself and how to become a smart buyer while shopping online or offline. Investing the time to become an aware consumer is well worth. In the country like India, which has a higher population rate and an illiteracy rate, there is a great need to increase consumer awareness especially among teenagers. Consumer awareness plays a key role in decision making and benefits society by promoting customer satisfaction, increasing economic stability and creating realistic expectations. The benefits of consumer awareness of an individual include enhanced critical thinking, improved life skills and increased self confidence. Legal and administrative machinery and consumer redressal system are working in our country under which the consumers can file a complaint in a consumer court and demand justice when they are cheated by the sellers or manufacturers of the products or services.

CONSUMERS' RIGHTS

The Charter of Consumer Rights has been drawn up to enable a human being to achieve social justice and economic equality. It seeks to redress the imbalances and conflicts between one another. It may be the individual versus the state, the buyer versus the seller and so on. The charter is not just for the consumer fighting for his rights against any particular state or seller, but the right of the entire world community against exploitation and for achieving a better and more just world.

As per the **Consumer Protection Act 1986**, the consumer has **Right to**

1. **SAFETY** –which means right to be protected against the marketing of goods which is hazardous to life and property.
2. **BE INFORMED** –which means right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and the price of goods to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices.
3. **CHOOSE**- which means to right to be assured, wherever possible, of access to a variety of goods at competitive prices.
4. **BE HEARD**-which means that consumer's interest will receive due consideration at appropriate forums.
5. **SEEK REDRESSAL**- which means right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers.



6. **CONSUMER EDUCATION**- which means right to acquire the knowledge and skill to be informed to consumer.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Consumer awareness means creating awareness of a consumer towards his rights and duties. Teenagers constitute an important target market segment and require attention from a marketing perspective. Parents are increasingly permitting and encouraging their children, especially teenagers take decisions when shopping. It then becomes very important for teenagers to check the details (e.g. Labels) before buying products. In the market, the teenagers are cheated by the businessmen as they sell products by weighing the products on faulty scales, overpricing, duplicate products, etc. Thus, the teenagers are facing a number of problems from the initial stage of their life. The present research was carried out with the aim to ascertain the socio-economic profile of the teenagers and to get an insight into the awareness regarding quality assurance marks, consumer rights, their habits to check /read the labeling and various problems faced by them and their solutions while shopping.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess consumer awareness among teenagers regarding quality assurance marks and consumers' rights.
- To assess the consumer awareness among teenagers regarding the information displayed on the products.
- To find out the frequency of problems faced by the teenagers while shopping and complaints pattern followed by them in case of problems or complaints.
- To find out responses to complaints made by the teenagers.
- To assess the impact of demographic variables on different parameters of consumer awareness.
- To suggest measures to increase consumer awareness among teenagers based on the findings of the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indira Nair (2012) in her article, "Assessment of consumer awareness amongst undergraduate students of Thane-District-A Case Study" stated that in spite of the various initiatives undertaken by the government to educate and promote welfare of the consumers; the level of consumer awareness is limited. There is an urgent and increasing necessity to



educate consumers so that they can be protected against the exploitation of the manufacturers and sellers.

Lavanya et al. (2012) conducted a research on “Consumer awareness and preference towards quality certified products” to know about food safety. The study was also carried to analyze the consumers’ awareness, preference of certified products and their perception of pricing products with reference kitchen articles like ghee, vegetable oils and spices. The study revealed that overall satisfaction of consumers was higher for ghee followed by vegetable oil. The consumer stated that AGMARK satisfied them in terms of quality. Among the factors influencing the preference for AGMARK products, purity stands first, followed by price and availability.

Kulkarni & Mehta(2013) in their article “Buying practices and Consumer Rights Awareness in Management Students” studied that most of the management students are aware of consumer rights but they never lodge the complaints against traffickers. Therefore, they need to be educated by the consumer organizations & government more about the procedure of registering complaints and seeking redressal.

Hawa Singh & Hemlata Sharma (2013) in their article “Consumer Perception towards Quality marks of Products”, elaborated that there are differences in the levels of awareness about quality marks, across education. They also suggested that levels of awareness among respondents varied according to their occupation. They also highlighted the need for education regarding the framework of business and measures could be taken by checking all pre-requisites at the time of purchasing.

Baku & Sanju (2013), in their article “Certification scheme and Marks: A New Mandate for quality Assurance of food and drugs” views that certification from a competent authority builds consumer confidence and clears all suspicions and doubts about the product. It is reliable testimony to state that product has confirmed to the established standards. Certification of the product assures the consumer about the safety and quality of the product they are using. The certification marks have a positive impact on the consumer psyche. The work brings to before the existence, importance and need of different type of certifications that will certify the product quality and safety so as the consumer could believe in what they are paying for its safe and effective



Mohammad Azvar Khan (2013), in his study entitled, "Consumer rights awareness in urban and rural areas of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts: an empirical study" identified that the consumer awareness is much needed today as they pay for the products from their hard earned money and they should get it worth. Right from the start consumers have been cheated by wrong information, higher pricing, after sales service. With regard to service providers, they take advantage of consumer urgency and exploit them. Hence, Consumer rights awareness (CRA) is most vital to society and a way to eliminate malpractices by the manufacturers, producers, and marketers. . It is consumer fundamental right to know about the safety, durability, worthiness of any product they are buying. There are many instances that consumer insists for bills, records, warrantee cards and many times they ignore and it leads to black money transactions, malpractices and what not. Every product has to be displayed with date of manufacturing, weight measurements, maximum retail price (M.R.P.) and warnings of its misuse. Although there are a number of laws introduced and still the traders find it easy to dodge and ultimately consumers are the sufferers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design: The research design of the present study is descriptive and explanatory.

The methodology of the study: The study is built on secondary sources and further researched on primary data which was collected from the teenagers by using a structured questionnaire and interview schedule designed for this purpose.

Survey Process: The survey process was carried out in various schools across the town. The information was collected through a carefully designed questionnaire from the target students. The questionnaire primarily covered topics such as awareness regarding quality assurance marks, consumer rights and consumer problems, etc. A Convenience sampling procedure has been used in this study.

The period of the study: The study was carried out between the periods from Jan- April 2014.

Sample size: There were 120 participants in the present study in the age group ranging from 13-19 Years.

Tools: The researchers tested the gathered respondent's opinion data by administrating statistical tests like percentage, chi-square and weighted average score by using the statistical package SPSS version 16.0 software.



Hypothesis

- 1. Ho:** There is no significant difference between male and female respondents with regards to consumer awareness.
- 2. Ho:** There is no significant difference between early teenage respondents and late teenage respondents with regards to consumer awareness.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following limitations:

1. The study was conducted only in NCR area. Therefore the derived results of the study are limited to that area.
2. The study was conducted for the period of 3-4 months.
3. The study is micro in nature as the sample size is 120 respondents. Hence it is not necessary that it truly represents the population universe.
4. The study is limited to the consumer awareness among teenagers of selected sample respondents and does not capture the views of other consumers and their role to aware.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of the respondents as shown in the table 1 included 47.5% males and 52.5% females. Large no. of respondents (57.5%) was aged between 13-16 years and rests were aged between 17-19 years. Parents' role in awaking their children regarding purchasing is also very important. Therefore profile regarding respondents' parents was also collected regarding their qualification and occupation. As far as qualification of respondents' father was concerned, it was noted that most were graduates or postgraduates and the majority were engaged in earning through business or service. As far as qualification of respondents' mother was concerned, 50% of them were up to senior secondary and rest graduates or post graduates. Majority of respondents' mother (80.8%) were home maker.

In helping consumers to exercise the rights, quality and standards have a crucial role to play. Standards provide consumer with reliable benchmarks of quality. The govt. has taken many initiatives in introducing quality assurance marks, e.g. ISI mark, AGMARK, FPO, GREENMARK and BROWNMARK, WOOLMARK etc. In order to check the awareness of teenagers regarding different quality assurance marks on different products, an attempt was made. The table 2 exhibits that majority of respondents were aware of AGMARK (70%), ISI (70.8%), HALLMARK



(67.5%) and GREENMARK (65.8%) and they stated that they had observed these marks while purchasing products. While going through the results, it was noted from the table 2 that few numbers of the respondents were aware of the FPO (27.5%), WOOLMARK (37.5%), ECOMARK (32.5%) and BROWNMARK (29.2%). On the other hand it is interesting to note that the rest of the respondents clearly expressed that they had not observed these quality assurance marks while shopping.

Table1. Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	57	47.5
Female	63	52.5
Total	120	100
Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
Early teen (13-16)	69	57.5
Late teen (17-19)	51	42.5
Total	120	100
Father's qualification	No. of respondents	Percentage
Up to senior secondary	36	30.0
Graduate	58	48.3
Postgraduate	26	21.7
Total	120	100
Father's occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Business	56	46.7
Service	57	47.5
Profession	7	5.8
Total	120	100
Mother's qualification	No. of respondents	Percentage
Up to Senior Secondary	60	50.0
Graduate	42	35.0
Postgraduate	18	15.0
Total	120	100.0
Mother's occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Homemaker	97	80.8
Job	23	19.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Primary data



Table 2: Respondents Awareness about Quality Assurance Marks

S. No.	Quality Assurance Marks	Yes	No
1	FPO	33(27.5)	87(72.5)
2	AGMARK	84(70)	36(30)
3	ISI	85(70.8)	35(29.2)
4	WOOLMARK	45(37.5)	75(62.5)
5	HALLMARK	81(67.5)	31(32.5)
6	ECOMARK	39(32.5)	81(67.5)
7	GREEN MARK	79(65.8)	41(34.2)
8	BROWN MARK	35(29.2)	85(70.8)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages.

It can be inferred from the table 2 that the majority of respondents were aware of AGMARK, ISIMARK, HALLMARK and GREENMARK and the majority of respondents were not aware of FPOMARK, WOOLMARK, ECOMARK and BROWNMARK while all these quality assurance marks should be quite known to all the consumers even of the teenager.

Table.3. Quality Assurance Marks and Demographic Variables

S.no.	Quality Assurance Marks	Gender			Age		
		χ^2	Df	Sig.	χ^2	Df	Sig.
1	FPO	2.264	1	0.132	0.667	1	0.414
2	AGMARK	2.420	1	0.120	1.768	1	0.184
3	ISI	0.912	1	0.339	0.580	1	0.446
4	WOOLMARK	4.119	1	0.042	2.185	1	0.139
5	HALLMARK	0.971	1	0.324	3.254	1	0.071
6	ECOMARK	0.354	1	0.552	1.823	1	0.177
7	GREENMARK	0.323	1	0.570	1.005	1	0.316
8	BROWNMARK	1.115	1	0.291	0.003	1	0.959

Source: Primary data

The study was attempted to find whether there exists significant differences or there is no significant difference between the male and female teenagers regarding awareness of different quality assurance marks. Calculation through the statistical chi - square was done through SPSS. As indicated in table3, there exists significant differences between the male and female regarding awareness about WOOLMARK($\chi^2 =4.119$, $P<0.05$). There is no significant difference between male and female teenagers regarding awareness of rest of quality assurance marks.



A chi-square test was also performed to determine whether there exists significant differences or there is no significant difference between early teenagers and late teenagers regarding awareness of different quality assurance marks. As indicated in table 3, there is no significant difference between early teenagers and late teenagers regarding awareness of rest of quality assurance marks.

It is necessary to provide important information, e.g. M.R.P., weight, quality assurance marks, expiry date etc. because consumers are given right to obtain information about products and services they buy. It is the responsibility of the consumer to check specific information written on the packing of the products.

Table 4: Type of Information Teenager Check While Purchasing Products

S.no.	Factors	Most of Times	Sometimes	Never
1	Price/M.R.P.	106(83.3)	10(8.3)	4(3.3)
2	Expiry & Manufacturing date	101(84.2)	19(15.8)	---
3	Weight/Size	45(37.5)	61(50.8)	14(11.7)
4	Brand Name	95(79.2)	22(18.3)	3(2.5)
5	Quality assurance marks	54(45.0)	44(36.7)	22(18.3)

Source: Primary data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages.

To determine the respondents' awareness about the information given on the labels of the products, they were asked to indicate the factors that they check while shopping. The findings are represented in the table 4. Information about expiry and manufacturing date was sought by 84.2% of respondents most of the times. This was followed by price with 83.3% of the respondents reporting that most of times they checked the price/M.R.P. of the products. 79.2% of the respondents report that they checked the brand name most of the times. 45% of the respondents were checking the quality assurance marks on products. However, weight/size of the products was found to be pursued by 37.5% of respondents most of times and by 50.8% of respondents sometimes.



Table 5: Type of information checked on products and Demographic Variables

S.no.	Factors	Gender			Age		
		χ^2	Df	Sig.	χ^2	Df	Sig.
1	Price/M.R.P.	1.291	2	0.613	0.298	2	1.000
2	Expiry & Manufacturing date	6.206	1	0.013	2.420	1	0.120
3	Weight/Size	8.089	2	0.018	1.920	2	0.383
4	Brand name	1.735	2	0.467	2.418	2	0.301
5	Quality assurance marks	12.047	2	0.002	2.539	2	0.281

Source: Primary data

The statistical tool chi-square was used to study the association between the type of information teenagers checked on products while shopping and their demographic variables. From the table 5, it is evident that a significant relationship can be seen between expiry & the manufacturing date ($\chi^2 = 6.206$, $p < .05$) and gender of the respondent. Also checking of information regarding the weight/size ($\chi^2 = 8.089$, $p < .05$) and quality assurance marks ($\chi^2 = 12.047$, $p < .05$) seem to be related to the gender of respondents. There exists no significant association between the information checking regarding price/M.R.P. of the product and brand name of the products and gender of the respondents statistically.

A chi-square test was also performed to determine whether there exists any association difference between early teenagers and late teenagers regarding information checking on the products. The table 5 exhibits that there exists no significant association between the information checking regarding price/M.R.P. of the product, expiry & manufacturing date, weight /size, brand name and quality assurance marks of the products and age of the respondents statistically.

AWARENESS REGARDING CONSUMERS' RIGHTS

The respondents were asked to express their awareness level regarding consumers' rights. It is evident from the table 6 that majority of respondents (55 percent) was partially aware and 42.5 percent of respondents were fully aware about consumers' rights. Very few respondents (2.5 percent) had never heard about consumers' rights. As far as gender categories of respondents is concerned male respondents were more aware about the



consumers' rights as shown in table 6 and as far as age group of respondents is concerned, late teenagers were more aware about the consumers' rights as shown in table 7.

The results of the chi - square test shown in table 6 and table 7 reveal that there is no significant difference among the awareness regarding consumers' rights belonging to different gender categories and age groups.

Table 6: Awareness regarding Consumers' Rights and Demographic Variable (Gender)

Variable	Gender	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig. Value
		Fully Aware	Partially Aware	Never Heard			
Consumers' rights	Male	25(43.9)	30(52.6)	2(3.5)	.689	2	.731
	Female	26(41.3)	36(57.1)	1(1.6)			
	Total	51(42.5)	66(55.0)	3(2.5)			

Source: Primary data

Note: Figure in parenthesis is in percentage.

Table 7: Awareness regarding Consumers' Rights and Demographic Variable (Age)

Variable	Age	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig. Value
		Fully Aware	Partially Aware	Never Heard			
Consumers' rights	Early teen	24(34.8)	43(62.3)	2(2.9)	4.071	2	.112
	Late teen	27(52.9)	23(45.1)	1(2.0)			
	Total	51(42.5)	66(55.0)	3(2.5)			

Source: Primary data

Note: Figure in parenthesis is in percentage.

PROBLEMS FACED WHILE SHOPPING

Table 8: Problems faced while shopping and Demographic variable (gender)

Variable	Gender	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig. Value
		Frequently	Sometimes	Never			
Problems Faced	Male	5(8.8)	38(66.7)	14(24.6)	5.069	2	.078
	Female	5(7.9)	52(82.5)	6(9.5)			
	Total	10(8.3)	90(75.0)	20(16.7)			

Source : Primary data

Note: Figure in parenthesis is in percentage.



Table 9: Problems faced while shopping and demographic variable (age)

Variable	Age	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig. Value
		Frequently	Sometimes	Never			
Problems Faced	Early teen	5(7.2)	53(76.8)	11(15.9)	.453	2	.857
	Late teen	5(9.8)	37(72.5)	9(17.6)			
	Total	10(8.3)	90(75.0)	20(1.76)			

Source: Primary data

Note: Figure in parenthesis is in percentage.

Producers and sellers exploit the consumers in many ways as under weighing, charging more prices than market prices, selling duplicate products, etc. Big companies through their advertisement also mislead the consumers. To know the experience of problems while shopping, responses were obtained at three scales by the way of question, "Have you ever experienced any problem e.g. .duplicate products or overpricing." Table 8 depicts that the majority of respondents (75 percent) had sometimes experienced problems while shopping and 16.7 percent never experienced problems. As far as the gender category of respondents is concerned, female respondents had experienced problems more than male respondents (as shown in table 8). As far as the age group of respondents is concerned, early teenagers had experienced problems more than late teenagers. The results of the chi - square test shown in table 8 and table 9 revealed that there is no significant difference between the problems faced while shopping belonging to the different gender categories and age groups.

Table 10: Forward Complaints to and Demographic Variable (Gender)

Variable	Gender	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig. Value
		Shopkeeper	Main supplier	Any other			
Complain to	Male	36(83.7)	3(7.0)	4(9.3)	.145	2	1.0
	Female	48(84.2)	4(7.0)	5(8.8)			
	Total	84(84.4)	7(7.0)	9(9.0)			

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figure in parentheses is in percentage.



Table 11: Forward Complaints to and Demographic Variable (Age)

Variable	Age	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig Value
		Shopkeeper	Main supplier	Any other			
Complain to	Early teen	47(81.0)	4(6.9)	7(12.1)	1.543	2	.498
	Late teen	37(88.1)	3(7.1)	2(4.8)			
	Total	84(84.0)	7(7.0)	9(9.0)			

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figure in parentheses is in percentage.

Consumers have the right to speak up and voice their dissatisfaction. To know the reaction of consumers in case of any problem or complaints, a query was made from the respondents. Table 10 and table 11 list their responses in this regard. Table 10 reveals that the majority of respondents (84 percent) complained to a shopkeeper and very few respondents complained to main supplier (7 per cent) and to others (9 percent). As far as gender of respondents is concerned, female respondents had more tendencies to complain to the shopkeeper than male respondents as shown in table 10. As far as the age of respondents is concerned, late teenage group respondents had more tendency to complain to shopkeepers than early teenage groups. The chi - square test was also performed to determine if gender categories and age groups had a significant effect on the tendency of complaining. The test indicated that insignificant differences exist regarding complaints to shopkeepers, main supplier and others, irrespective of respondent's demographic variables (gender, age).

RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS

Table 12: Response to Complaints and Deographic variable (Gender)

Source: Primary data

Variable	Gender	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig. value
		Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	No response			
Results to their Complaints	Male	15(34.9)	14(32.6)	14(32.6)	4.98	2	.083
	Female	27(47.4)	22(38.6)	8(14.0)			
	Total	42	36	22			

Note: Figure in parentheses is in percentage.



Table 13: Response to Complaints and Demographic variable (Age)

Variable	Age	Response observed			χ^2	Df	Sig. Value
		Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	No response			
Results to their Complaints	Early teen	22(37.9)	19(32.8)	17(29.3)	4.302	2	.116
	Late teen	20(47.6)	17(40.5)	5(11.9)			
	Total	42(42.0)	36(36.0)	22(22.0)			

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figure in parentheses is in percentage.

An attempt was made to know the results of complaints forwarded to shopkeepers, main supplier and others. Table 12 reveals that the majority of respondents (42 percent) stated that they got satisfactory results to their complaints, 36 percent of respondents got not satisfactory results and 22 percent of respondents got no response of their complaints. As far as the gender categories of respondents were concerned, the majority of female respondents got satisfactory results than male respondents.

A large number of male respondents (32.6 percent) got no response to their complaints as shown in table 12 than female respondents (14 percent). As far as age groups of respondents were concerned, the majority of late teenagers got more satisfactory results than early teenage group respondents. A number of early teenage respondents (29.3 percent) were more than the late teenage group respondents (11.9 percent) who got no response to their complaints. From the chi-square values shown in table 12 and 13, it can be revealed that there exists no significant relation among the respondents belonging to different gender categories and age groups regarding the results to their complaints.

Table 14: Agreement Level of Respondents Regarding Different Issues

S. No.	Issues	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	WAS
1	Children like to purchase those brands which their friends have.	39 (32.5)	43 (35.8)	28 (23.3)	6 (5.0)	4 (3.3)	3.89
2	Fake brands are more available in the market.	26 (21.7)	63 (52.5)	2 (1.7)	8 (6.7)	2 (1.7)	3.86
3	Advertisements mislead the children generally.	30 (25.0)	59 (49.2)	20 (16.7)	9 (7.5)	2 (1.7)	3.88
4	Packaging attracts the children more.	56 (46.7)	39 (32.5)	18 (15.0)	4 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	4.18



5	Children are interested to buy those products which are advertised by famous personalities.	57 (47.5)	38 (31.7)	12 (10.0)	10 (8.3)	3 (2.5)	4.13
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Source: Primary data

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages.

To know the agreement level of respondents, some statements were framed in this study. Table 14 depicts that majority of respondents (47.5%) were strongly agreed that children are interested to buy those products which are advertised by famous personalities and packaging attracts the children more. On an average respondent (having average weighted score more than 4) was 'agree to strongly agree' regarding impact of attractive packaging and advertisements by famous personalities. On the bases of the response of respondents (average weighted scores about 4), the table reveals that the majority of respondents was agreed that 'Fake brands are more available in the market', 'Children like to purchase those brands which their friends have' and 'Advertisements mislead the children generally'.

Table 15: Weighted Average Scores Regarding Different Issues and Demographic Variables

S.No.	Issues	Age	WAS	Gender	WAS
1.	Children like to purchase those brands which their friends have.	Early Teen	3.68	Male	3.77
		Late Teen	4.18	Female	3.97
2.	Fake brands are more available in the market.	Early Teen	3.90	Male	4.07
		Late Teen	3.80	Female	3.76
3.	Advertisements mislead the children generally.	Early Teen	3.84	Male	3.81
		Late Teen	3.94	Female	3.96
4.	Packaging attracts the children more.	Early Teen	4.05	Male	4.18
		Late Teen	4.33	Female	4.16
5.	Children are interested to buy those products which are advertised by famous personalities	Early Teen	4.0	Male	4.12
		Late Teen	4.31	Female	4.14

Source: Primary data

In order to see whether there exists any agreement among respondents belonging to a different demographic profile with respect to ratings of different issues regarding consumer awareness, a further attempt was made. The results showed that on an average respondent irrespective of different gender category and age group was agreed to all statements related to awareness getting a score more than 3. As far as gender of respondents was concerned, on an average respondent belonging to male category was 'agree to strongly agree'



regarding 'Fake brands are more available in market' while the agreement levels of females was lower than males regarding this statement. As far as age group of respondents was concerned, on an average respondent belonging to late teen was 'agree to strongly agree' regarding 'Children like to purchase those brands which their friends have' while the agreement levels of early teenagers was lower than late teenagers regarding this statement.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The consumer is the real deciding factor for all economic activities. An enlightened consumer is an empowered consumer. An aware consumer not only protects himself from exploitation, but induces efficiency, transparency and accountability in the entire manufacturing and service sector. With the increasing changes in economic conditions, the teenagers, especially, are becoming young consumers at an early age. Teenagers can be taught to shop wisely and a few simple precautions will ensure that they choose the right product at the right price. It is but natural that parents wish the best for their children, and strive hard to fulfill their demands. To sum up it can be said that there is a great need of making the teenagers aware about their rights. In general, they are ignorant about their rights.

The Government should make sufficient attempts to educate the consumers especially teenagers. They must be educated through awareness programs like seminars, workshops, etc. Effectively educational and marketing programs are important and still needed to protect the consumers. Let us all unite to beware of poor quality, fake brands, misleading advertisements and attractive packaging with poor quality products etc.

BE AN ALERT CONSUMER! AND ALSO BE A RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER.

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