

CONSUMER! BEWARE, BE AWARE!

L.No	Title of Lesson	SKILLS	Activity
22	Consumer! Beware, Be Aware!	SelfAwareness, Empathy, Interpersonal Relationship, Effective Communication, Problem Solving, Decision Making Coping with Stress & Emotion	Awareness about consumer rights and consumer responsibilities

Summary

A **consumer** is a person who buys or uses either goods or services, to satisfy her/ his needs.

The **CPA (Consumer Protection Act 1986)** clearly identifies two categories of consumers:

- (i) One who buys and uses any goods
- (ii) One who hires or avails of any service for personal use

As consumers, we face a lot of problems. Some common problems are:

- Price variation
- Lack of standardization
- Imitation
- Adulteration
- Black-marketing

To tackle these problems, consumer needs to be aware. Such awareness can be brought about by proper education. Consumers need to be educated on what, when, how much, where to buy and how to pay for their purchases. They must get the best returns for the money spent. A lot of these decisions depend upon what the consumers see or hear.

A consumer aid is anything written or illustrated that helps and guides a consumer in selecting a product he/she wants to buy. Some examples of consumer aids are labels, packaging and advertisements.

A consumer also has certain rights and responsibilities. Knowledge about these will help the consumer to fight against the various malpractices adopted by salesmen and manufactures.

Principal Points

A **consumer aid** is anything written or illustrated that helps and guides a consumer in selecting a product he/she wants to buy. Consumer aids are-

- **Labels:** They are used on packaged products
- **Leaflets-** provide the cost and instructions for installation and maintenance.
- **Packages:** They protect product from damage and breakage.
- **Advertisements:** They give information about the use and special features of the product.
- **Standardized marks:** They indicate whether a product has been produced in accordance with the norms laid down by the standardizing agency.
- **Legislation:** These refer to the laws passed by the government to protect consumer interests eg. CPA
- **Consumer Organizations-** educate consumers on various issues and work for their welfare.

Build Your Understanding

Your Rights as a consumer help you to fight against the various malpractices adopted by salesmen and manufacturers. These are:

- Right to Safety
- Right to Information
- Right to Be Heard
- Right to Choose
- Right to Redressal
- Right to Consumer Education
- Right to Represent
- Right to Basic Needs
- Right to Healthy Environment

Did You Know?

Consumer Court deals with cases regarding consumer disputes and grievances. These are judiciary set ups by the government to protect the consumer rights. Their main function is to maintain the fair practices by the sellers towards consumers. They are at National level, State level and District level.

Extend Your Horizon

There is a garbage dump near your house which has not been cleared for a month. In this situation, which consumer right is violated? What action will you take as a responsible consumer?

What's Important to Know?

Some common problems and their solutions faced by consumers: (make a grid for the following)

<u>PROBLEMS</u>	<u>SOLUTION</u>
1) Price variation -shopkeepers often charge more than M.R.P	1) M.R.P. is inclusive of all taxes . Never pay more than M.R.P.
2) Lack of standardized products -shopkeepers promote substandard products because they get high commission on them.	2) Compare features of a few brands of the product. Check out the differences and make a wise choice.
3) Imitation – Popular brands are often imitated to gain popularity.	3) Compare and note the differences in the quality of the popular as well as the imitated brand.
4) Adulteration – manufacturers and shopkeepers intentionally adulterate food products.	4) Do simple adulteration test at home or get doubtful samples tested at P.F.A. Buy sealed products of reputed brands.
5) Non-availability, black marketing and hoarding – Before the annual budget and festivals, shopkeepers hoard stocks, so that they can later sell and earn higher profits.	5) When in short supply , shift to a different brand or use an alternate product e.g. use jaggery instead of sugar.
6) Defective weights and measures –often use stones instead of proper weights or stick magnets under the balance.	6) Check weights and measures before buying any product.

Evaluate Yourself

1. Mention any two responsibilities you should fulfill to maintain a healthy environment.
2. Advise your friend three practices he/she should follow to keep away from adulterated food.

Maximize your marks

Do the activities suggested and answer questions in the lesson to build a understanding of the topic.