



## AWARENESS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT AMONG FARMERS OF ZONE III A OF BIHAR

Ranvir Kumar and Smt. Suman Kalyani\*

Bihar Agricultural College, Sabour(Bhagalpur)-813210

\*Correspondence Author : Smt. Suman Kalyani

### ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to examine the awareness of consumer protection act among farmers. The study revealed that as many as 56 percent of the farmers were aware of consumer right. More than one fourth (31%) of the respondents came to know about Consumer protection Act 1986 through Television followed by Radio (27%), News paper (19%), Friends and relatives (18%) and other resources (5%). Farmers are able to bargaining at Maximum retail prices and verify the quality and quantity of the input as they come gradually educated through government efforts.

**Key words :** Consumers protection, awareness, accessibility.

At present with passes of time an advancement of new technology and commercialization of agriculture the production potential boosted. But unfortunately the Indian farmers in general are poor in India due to exploitation by the traders as they depends on traders for most of the modern agricultural inputs which are crucial for enhancing productivity. Recognizing the importance of consumer awareness, the government has accorded top priority to consumer education, consumer protection and consumer awareness. The Consumer protection Act 1986 is a milestone in this regards. The act applies to all goods and services unless specially exempted by the central government in all sectors whether private, public or cooperative. As per consumer protection act 1986 consumer protection council have been established at central, state and district level to promote and protect the consumer right. They are: right to safety (to be protected against sale of goods and services which are hazardous of life), right to information ( to know the quality and quantity, weight and price of goods/services being paid for so that one is not cheated by unfair trade practice), Right to Heard ( to be heard and to be assured that the interest would receive due consideration at appropriate flora), Right to seek redressal (to seek legal redressal against unfair of restrictive trade practices or exploitation), Right to consumer education(to have access to consumer education). It was identified consumer awareness, redressal and enforcement of consumer protection act as priority areas for action by the department of Consumer affairs, government of India. Every years 24<sup>th</sup> of December is being celebrated as Nation consumer Day commemorating the coming into effect of consumer Protection Act 1986. And the slogan "JagoGrahakJago" has now become a house hold

name as a result of publicity campaign initiated by the government. But still many people are ignorant of consumer courts, procedure etc. The economy of Bihar is fully dependent upon agriculture. Therefore the present study was undertaken to examine the consumer rights awareness and accessibility by the farmers in Zone III A of Bihar.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary data were collected from farmers from a sample of 50 farmers of Sabour block of the selected district Bhagalpur falling under Zone III A of Bihar randomly for the present study. Data pertaining to their awareness of consumer rights, Sources of information, problem faced by them were taken with the help of interview schedule specifically prepared for this purpose. The data so collected were analyzed with the help of frequency, percentage etc.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### (A) Awareness of Consumer Protection Act–

The extent of awareness about consumer protection act i.e. awareness of the farmers about consumer protection and sources of information were studied. Though the exact knowledge of every provision in the consumer protection act is off course impossible for each and every consumer farmer yet they should at least know that such an act exist so that they can refer it when they have been wronged.

**(i) Extent of awareness about Consumer protection Act-1986 :** The extent of awareness about consumer protection act has been presented in table-1.

It may be observed from the study that in the

**Table-1** : Extent of awareness of farmers about the consumer protection act. (N=50)

Sl. No.	Extent of awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Aware	28	56.00
2.	Not aware	19	38.00
3.	Yes, having idea (after hints)	3	6.00

**Table-2** : Sources of information about Consumer protection Act 1986.

Sl. No.	Sources of awareness	Percentage(%)
1.	Television	31.00
2.	Radio	27.00
3.	News paper and Magazine	19.00
4.	Friends and Relatives	18.00
5.	Others	05.00

**Table-3** : Accessibility of services of consumer forum.

Sl. No.	Extent of Accessibility of Consumer protection Act	Respondent Percentage (%)
1.	Easy	29.00
2.	Tough	71.00

present study about 56 percent of the total respondents were aware of law governing to the consumer protection. This was unaided recall as in this case no hints were given to them. To know the actual awareness, the farmers were given hints about their rights and then they were asked if they were already aware and it was found that only 38 percent of the farmers were not at all aware of their right and remaining 62 percent farmers who had some idea of consumer rights. This information is quite encouraging and is an indication that a large proportion of the farming community of study area is alert about their right.

**(ii) Sources of information about Consumer protection Act :** The farmers were asked about the sources of their information about consumer protection Act and have been presented in table -2 and as it is evident from the table that more than one fourth (31%) of the selected farmers came to know about Consumer protection act through Television followed by Radio (27%), News paper and Magazines (19%), Friends and relatives (18%) and other sources (5%).

The result indicates that at present the farmers in the state are using the available mass media particularly two electronic media i.e. TV and Radio (58%) of communication more than the traditional

means. It is an indication that the farmers of the state like Zone III A of Bihar are growingly becoming conscious about these powerful sources and use them for seeking information about new schemes launched by the government or may be other agencies also. Accordingly, consumer awareness campaign should be further strengthened in these media so that more and number of consumer farmers becomes aware of their right and thereby able to protect themselves.

### **(B) Accessibility of complaint redressal procedure**

In order to get the benefit of provisions of consumers right; consumers have to be aware about consumer forum. The accessibility of this provision with respect to farmers were examined and presented in table-3. It may be observed from the table-3 that only 29.00 percent of the respondents considered accessibility to consumer forum easy.

Making contact with consumer forum was thought to be tough by about 71.00 percent of the respondent farmers. Since easy or difficult to use is the key of the success of any services, keeping in view the above facts, there is need of much efforts by the government for easy approachable to the forum.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The present study was an attempt to examine the awareness of Consumer protection Act 1986 and revealed that a large group of the farmers were aware about consumer right. However, action should take to create more awareness in the rural area particularly through electronic media i.e. TV and Radio because it was found to be more effective method to create awareness among farmers. Government should make efforts to make a campaign about awareness programme for farmer about the procedure of filing complaint, location of the forum as well as level of the forum for better accessibility to the farmers. NGOs and Government should initiate programme for consumer protection act education through integrated approach.

## **REFERENCES**

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