

Consumer Rights

Practice Questions

Q. 1. What does COPRA stand for?

Answer: COPRA stands for Consumer Protection Act and it is a major step taken in 1986 by the Indian government was the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act 1986, popularly known as COPRA. Consumer Protection Act, 1986 enables the consumer to enhance major six rights and they are

- Right to be Protected
- Right to be Informed
- Right to be Assured
- Right to be Heard
- Right to seek Redressal

Q. 2. Mention any two ways of exploitation of consumers in the market.

Answer: In the current scenario, the telecom industry is charging higher rates for the recharge the mobile. They are offering only unlimited packs and also consumer forced to buy mobile offer acquiring sim card, therefore, consumers are only allowed to choose what they offer.

Another instance is that gas dealer forces the consumer that he has to buy the stove for buying the gas. Then consumer is said to be denied for the right to choose.

Q. 3. What efforts were taken by consumer organizations in the 1970s?

Answer: In India, the Consumer Movement originated as a 'social force' for protecting and promoting consumers against unethical and unfair trade practices. The consumer movement was organized in the 1960s because of the continuous emergence of the rampant food shortage, hoarding, black marketing, adulteration of food and edible oil. Till 1970's the consumer movement was largely engaged in the writing articles and holding exhibition. They formed the consumer group into look after the malpractices that is taking place in the ration shops and overcrowding in road transport. This led to the upsurge in the number of consumer groups in India.

Q. 4. When the consumer movement did begin in an organised form?

Answer: The consumer movement arose out of dissatisfaction of the consumers as many unfair practices were being indulged in by the sellers. There was no legal system

available to consumers to protect them from exploitation in the marketplace. In India, the consumer movement as a 'social force' originated with the necessity of protecting and promoting the interests of consumers against unethical and unfair trade practices. Consumer Movement arose in the 1960s and it continued till 1986 when the Consumer protection was enacted to safeguard the interest of the consumers.

Q. 5. Why do production need follow the safety rules strictly?

Answer: The consumer can be a consumer of goods or a consumer of services. The situation in which the buyers do not receive the benefits and services according to the buyer's value or the situation in which the sellers receives or charges the value of commodities higher than its value is known as consumer exploitation. Therefore it is very much essential to safeguard the consumers from exploitation. Because of the intention for the safety of the consumers and to avoid the exploitation in quality of the product it is necessary to follow strict rules while the production process.

Q. 6. What information one should check before buying any garment?

Answer: The most important thing that is to be checked before buying any garment is the quality of the cloth and the type of material. This will help the consumer to be aware of the pricing made for the product.

Q. 7. If you are not interested in by a toothbrush with toothpaste but the shopkeeper denied to sell tooth paste only. In this case which consumer right is being violated by the seller? [Foreign 2016]

Answer: Right to choose

In this case violation of the right to choose is being done here. The consumer is not allowed to choose the commodity that he is willing to buy and forcefully another good is being added to the purchase of the commodity.

Any consumer who receives a service in whatever capacity, regardless of age, gender and nature of service, has the right to choose whether to continue to receive the service. The definition of Right to Choose as per the Consumer Protection Act 1986 is 'the right to be assured, wherever possible, to have access to a mixture of goods and services at competitive prices'.

Q. 8. Which consumer right entitles the consumer to get relief in case the product or service falls short of his expectations?

Answer: Right to seek Redressal

This right ensures to protect the consumers against unfair trade practices or immoral exploitation of consumers. This right also involves the right to a fair settlement of the

genuine grievances of the consumer. Therefore when there is a shortcoming in the expectations of the consumers this right can be entitled to consumers.

Q. 9. What should a consumer do to have proof of the purchase made?

Answer: If the consumer has been to the transaction with the producer, he should keep certain documents. It should be kept because they can be used as shreds of evidence. They are:

- Bill of the commodity
- Payment receipt
- The product which has been bought

These are the main things that are to be kept by the consumer

Q. 10. How do consumer rights benefit the consumer?

Answer: Consumer exploitation can be exploited through the purchase of goods and exploitation during the consumption of services. It can be through improper weighing, impurity, adulteration, deliberate hiding of facts, creating artificial shortages and excess in the market or through physical, mental and intellectual damages.

To prevent the exploitation faced by the consumers in the market, the Consumers Protection Act was enacted in 1986. The act was enacted to protect the interests of the consumers give them the right to be protected against various exploitations faced by them. It enabled the establishments of various consumer councils and other legislatures for protecting their interests

The consumers are being benefited by the consumer rights are:

- Prevents exploitation against consumers
- The commodities can be afforded by the reasonable price
- The consumer is given a platform to seek the Redressal if the commodity has any negative impact in life.

Q. 11. Which logo is used on spices?

Answer: The international standard used for the food items and spices is Agmark. If the product has the agmark symbol then the product has undergone the quality of international standard and it can be safely used

Q. 12. Suppose your parents want to purchase gold jewellery along with you, then which logo will you look for on the jewellery?

Answer: For purchasing the jewellery the logo which is to be noted for the international standard is the hallmark. If the product has the hallmark then the gold has qualified the international standard and it will not be duplicated

Q. 13. Consumers might be exploited by unscrupulous, exploitative and unfair trade practice. Give a few examples of such practices adopted by sellers.

Answer: a. Hoarding

Hoarding is an example of consumer exploitation. Consumer exploitation is taking advantage of consumers. The term "hoarding" may include the practice of obtaining and holding resources to create artificial scarcity, thus reducing the supply, to increase the price, so that they can be sold to customers for profit.

b. Adulteration

It is the process of mixing or substituting identical and undesirable materials in the food items. This will cause heavy loss to the consumers and also leads to many diseases while consuming undesirable commodities. For example Mixing of bricks powder in chilli powder, because both are identical and the consumer cannot differentiate it.

Q. 14. "Consumer awareness is essential to avoid exploitation in the market place." Support the statements.

Answer: Consumer awareness is the main and important criteria for avoiding the exploitation of consumers in the market place. Because when the consumer is aware of the malpractices that are being practised against him and the also there are rights which safeguards him from the exploitation it improves to raise the voice of the consumer against the exploitation. If the consumer is not aware of any of the right then the consumer will be forced to buy the product which is being exploited by the producer.

The government has taken various measures to increase awareness among consumers. To improve the judicial system and give more awareness and education to the people, many legal awareness programmes were designed and launched by the Central Government and various State Governments. The Legal Services Act was passed in 1987 to implement legal services uniformly in the country. Many plans were formulated and implemented to protect the public from unfair actions and to increase social welfare. Mass media has a major role in spreading the awareness to the ordinary consumers because the mass media communication has a wide range of network which can reach the message to miles away.

Q. 15. What do you think should be the role of government to protect consumers?

Answer: Consumer exploitation can be exploited through the purchase of goods and exploitation during the consumption of services. It can be through improper weighing, impurity, adulteration, deliberate hiding of facts, creating artificial shortages and excess in the market or through physical, mental and intellectual damages.

To prevent the exploitation faced by the consumers in the market, the Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 1986. The act was enacted to protect the interests of the consumers give them the right to be protected against various exploitations faced by them. It enabled the establishments of various consumer councils and other legislatures for protecting their interests.

To improve the judicial system and give more awareness and education to the people, many legal awareness programmes were designed and launched by the Central Government and various State Governments. Role of government to protect the consumers are:

- Ensure the efficient working of the organization which ensures the quality and standards of the products. Allow the producers to use the standard logo for products only if the consumer is the products according to the quality.
- The Right to Information Act was enacted by the Parliament on 15 June 2005. It was approved by both the houses and was legally implemented in the country with the assent of the President on 13 October 2005. It replaces the Freedom of Information Act 2002. The act gives the power to every citizen of the country to request and get information from any public authority
- Legal programmes- The Central and various state governments can telecast various programmes related to legal rights through All India Radio, Doordarshan and Community Radio. This will improve the legal literacy of the public.
- Legal awareness should be given to the people who are involved in the transaction process. Legal awareness is the process of empowering and strengthening the powers and authority of individuals through law. It is also called public legal education. It is the process of making the public aware of the powers, rights and authorities that they have at their disposal and how to utilise them to prevent exploitation and injustices.

Q. 16. Explain the various ways by which the consumers are exploited by the producers or wholesalers?:

Answer: A consumer is any person who consumes and receives satisfaction by paying the value for purchasing any commodity. The consumer can be a consumer of goods or a consumer of services. The situation in which the buyers do not receive the benefits and services according to the buyer's value or the situation in which the sellers receive or charges the value of commodities higher than its value is known as consumer

exploitation. Consumer exploitation can be made in many different ways in such major ways are being discussed:

a. Hoarding

Consumer exploitation is taking advantage of consumers. The term "hoarding" may include the practice of obtaining and holding resources to create artificial scarcity, thus reducing the supply, to increase the price, so that they can be sold to customers for profit.

b. Black marketing

The black market is the strategy used by the seller to sell the commodity higher by creating artificial scarcity. This is a market place which takes place outside the government-sanctioned channel.

c. Adulteration

It is the process of mixing or substituting identical and undesirable materials in the food items. This will cause heavy loss to the consumers and also leads to many diseases while consuming undesirable commodities. For example Mixing of bricks powder in chilli powder, because both are identical and the consumer cannot differentiate it.

d. False claim

Sellers make a false claim about the performance and quality of their product through advertisements. This false claim may attract consumers who are not aware of the original quality of the product.

e. Under measurement

Sellers generally give under measured goods and charge for the actual quantity. This quantity reduction will increase the profit of the sellers but exploit the consumers.

Q. 17. Why are rules made to display information by the manufactures?

Answer: The rules are being made displayed by the manufacturers because of the right that is implemented known as the right to be informed. The Right to Information Act enables many rights to the consumers which redress from the consumer disputes. The Right to Information Act was enacted by the Parliament on 15 June 2015. It was approved by both the houses and was legally implemented in the country with the assent of the President on 13 October 2005. It replaces the Freedom of Citizens Act 2002. The act gives the power to every citizen of the country to request and get information from any public authority. They are bound by the act to reply and furnish the information within 30 days of application request.

The main reasons behind the display of rules by the manufactures

- It makes the consumer more aware of the rules that are bound to be followed by entrepreneurs.
- The workers working in the manufacturing units will be aware of the rights that are being availed for them. Therefore their workforce cannot be misused in the production process.
- When the rules are being displayed the workers, the information will be updated by the workers whenever new rules are being implemented.

Q. 18. When we buy commodities we find the price charged is sometimes higher or lower than the Maximum Retail Price Printed on the pack. Discuss the possible reasons. Should consumer groups do something about this?

Answer: Maximum Retail Price (MRP) is the maximum price that can be charged by the retailer or wholesaler who sells the commodities. No consumer is supposed to pay them more than the price printed in the pack of the product. The most possible reason that the consumer can do for the charging against the Maximum retail price (MRP) are:

- Bargain maximum with the retailer if he charges more than the price that is printed as Maximum Retail Price. If even then the retailer is not convinced that approach the consumer court to sue exploitation.
- Motivate the consumer groups to pressurize the dealers to charge the price below or equal to the MRP. This will facilitate the sellers to charge a reasonable price for the product.

Q. 19. Explain with three suitable example the meaning of 'right to be informed' as provided under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Answer: The Right to Information Act was enacted by the Parliament on 15 June 2015. It was approved by both the houses and was legally implemented in the country with the assent of the President on 13 October 2005. It replaces the Freedom of Citizens Act 2002. The act gives the power to every citizen of the country to request and get information from any public authority. They are bound by the act to reply and furnish the information within 30 days of application request. Political parties and private bodies do not come under the purview of the act.

Under the act, every citizen has the right to:

- Receive information from any department or office of the State Governments and the Central Government.
- View the documents or records and take certified copies of the same.

- Take the sample materials of their workings.
- Get information on computers, CD, floppy and other storage devices.

Examples for the right which is to be informed:

- The consumer has the right to be informed about the particulars of the product that is sold. The seller is bound to explain the particulars of the goods and services if the consumer is not aware of the product.
- This right empowers the consumers to sue the sellers if they violate any rights that are to be given to the consumer. Therefore the consumer can seek for the replacement or compensation for the commodity if it causes any hazard to life.
- The act gives the power to every citizen of the country to request and get information from any public authority. Therefore any person can seek any information from any government offices for gaining information for the consumer.

Q. 20. What is the importance of logos and certification? How does it help consumers?

Answer: This logos and certification are international standards that are provided for the goods and services. International standards must be set up to the entire products to ensure the quality of the product. The standards must be well verified and tested by experts. The best-known standard in India is ISI for iron and steel, Agmark for food items and so on.

Importance of the logos and certification

- Improves the quality of the product that is being sold. Consumers will get qualified products and best materials because of these standards.
- Easily identifiable when the products are provided with logos and marks for the quality products. When the gold is given hallmark then the consumers then consumers can easily identify the pure gold, because if the gold is not pure this hallmark will not be given.
- Less dumping of low-quality products from foreign countries in the domestic country.

Benefits for the consumers

- Easily identifiable when the products are provided with logos and marks for the quality products.
- Consumers will get qualified products and best materials because of these standards.

Q. 21. People make complaints about the lack of civic amenities such as bad roads or poor water and health facilities but no one listens. Now the RTI Act gives you the power to question. Do you agree? Discuss.

Answer: Yes, the Right to Information Act enables many rights to the consumers which redress from the consumer disputes. The Right to Information Act was enacted by the Parliament on 15 June 2005. It was approved by both the houses and was legally implemented in the country with the assent of the President on 13 October 2005. It replaces the Freedom of Information Act 2002. The act gives the power to every citizen of the country to request and get information from any public authority. They are bound by the act to reply and furnish the information within 30 days of application request. Political parties and private bodies do not come under the purview of the act.

Under the act, every citizen has the right to:

- Receive information from any department or office of the State Governments and the Central Government.
- View the documents or records and take certified copies of the same.
- Take the sample materials of their workings.
- Get information on computers, CD, floppy and other storage devices.

The first appeal for getting the information may be made to the officials in the Panchayats, Municipalities, Secretariat and other government departments within 30 days of getting information from the concerned Information Officer. If the information is not furnished within the first 30 days, the concerned applicant may make a second appeal to the State Information Commission.

The act empowers the person to raise voice against the amenities that he is supposed to get. When the civic amenities in the area are very bad then the RTI empowers the person to which authority he supposed to be compliant. And also creates awareness among the person how to approach if the authority denies his consent.

The act was passed to empower the citizens and promote transparency and accountability in the working of the government. This helps to check corruption and other malpractices in the functioning of the government and the judicial system.

Q. 22. “Rule and regulations are required for the protection of the consumers in the market place.” Justify the statement with arguments. [All India 2016]

Answer: Rules and regulations are required for the protection of the consumers in the market place because to safeguard the consumers from the exploitation. Consumer exploitation can be exploited through the purchase of goods and exploitation during the consumption of services. It can be through improper weighing, impurity, adulteration,

deliberate hiding of facts, creating artificial shortages and excess in the market or through physical, mental and intellectual damages.

The reasons for the requirement of the rules and regulations are:

- To check adulteration

It is the process of mixing or substituting identical and undesirable materials in the food items. This will cause heavy loss to the consumers and also leads to many diseases while consuming undesirable commodities. For example Mixing of bricks powder in chilli powder, because both are identical and the consumer cannot differentiate it. Adulteration should be checked thoroughly because this type of adulteration in food items can cause severe diseases.

- Privatization

After the 1991 government has withdrawn from many of the production activities and private enterprise has been given autonomy in production. But there some sort of rules and regulation to control them from exploiting consumers because private agencies are profit oriented and they will charge high prices for the low-quality goods.

- To prevent Monopoly

When there are few powerful producers then they can easily capture the market and their influence in the production market will influence the consumer in the factors such as price, quality, quantity etc... Therefore it is very much essential of rules to prevent this monopoly power in the market.

- For seeking remedy

It is the rules and rights that made viable for the consumers to seek remedy if the commodity purchased has adverse effects for the consumers. This process of providing remedies will be very much useful for the consumers and also producers will produce quality goods for avoiding the extra compensation charged due to the collapse of the product.

Q. 23. State any five achievements of the consumer movements in India.

Answer: In India, the Consumer Movement originated as a 'social force' for protecting and promoting consumers against unethical and unfair trade practices. The consumer movement was organized in the 1960s because of the continuous emergence of the rampant food shortage, hoarding, black marketing, adulteration of food and edible oil. Till 1970's the consumer movement was largely engaged in the writing articles and holding exhibition. They formed the consumer group into look after the malpractices that is taking place in the ration shops and overcrowding in road transport. This led to the upsurge in the number of consumer groups in India.

Achievements of the consumer movement in India are:

- Reduction in malpractices against the consumers

The agenda of the consumer movements was to reduce the malpractices such as hoarding, black marketing, adulteration of food and edible oil. After the 1970s when the movement has emerged as mass protest there was a reduction in these malpractices in a huge amount.

- MRP is followed strictly

One of the exploitation against the consumer was charging higher than the maximum retail price. Maximum Retail Price (MRP) is the maximum price that can be charged by the retailer or wholesaler who sells the commodities. No consumer is supposed to pay them more than the price printed in the pack of the product. This was reduced to a great extent after the consumer movement that happened in India.

- Awareness of consumer rights

The most successful of the consumer movement was the creation of awareness among the consumer about consumer rights. When the consumers started to get awareness about consumer rights automatically the malpractices reduced because of questioning against the exploitation.

- Quality of commodities increased

After the consumer movement only the Consumer Protection Act was established. And also the influence of the consumer movement has created certain standards for the commodities that are to be followed. International standards are being started s the entire products to ensure the quality of the product. The standards must be well verified and tested by experts.

- Establishment of the consumer organization

The establishment of these organizations has helped the consumers to safeguard form the exploitation that is taking place against the consumers.

Q. 24. What are Consumer Protection Councils (CPCs)? What are the main activities of the CPCs?

Answer: Consumer exploitation can be exploited through the purchase of goods and exploitation during the consumption of services. It can be though improper weighing, impurity, adulteration, deliberate hiding of facts, creating artificial shortages and excess in the market or through physical, mental and intellectual damages. To prevent the exploitation faced by the consumers in the market, the Consumers Protection Act was enacted in 1986. The act was enacted to protect the interests of the consumers give

them the right to be protected against various exploitations faced by them. It enabled the establishments of various consumer councils and other legislatures for protecting their interests.

Consumer Protection Councils (CPCS) are the councils which are mainly set up for increasing the awareness about consumer rights and their duties among the consumers. It mainly set up in national, state and district levels. The main activities of the consumer protection Council are:

- They guide the consumers on how to file cases in the consumer courts. This will help ordinary consumers to use against the unfair trade practices that are happening against the consumers.
- In the case of the consumer who filed a case against the exploitation. The consumer council will represent the consumer in case the consumer becomes insolvent to move with the case.
- This Consumer Protection Council (CPC) will enhance the consumer welfare and they fully empower the consumers to protect themselves.

These are the main activities that are being followed by the consumer protection council for protecting the consumers from the exploitation.

Q. 25. While shopping if you insist upon a bill for the purchase made, which three values would you display as a consumer?

Answer: If the consumer has been to the transaction with the producer, he should keep certain documents. It should be kept because they can be used as shreds of evidence. They are:

- Bill of the commodity
- Payment receipt
- The product which has been bought

These are the main things that are to be kept by the consumer

If we insist on a bill for the purchase made it is the most important value that we are following a consumer. The values which can be displayed if we insist on the bill for the purchase made are:

- When the bill is being asked by the consumer the responsibility is being shared. Conserving the consumer from exploitation is the responsibility of both buyer and seller, therefore when the bill is asked the responsibility is being shared

- Responsibility as an efficient consumer is being practised when the bill is being asked for the transaction done by the consumer.
- Social justice can be ensured when the transaction is done with the most efficiency. The efficiency in a transaction means the proper transaction with a proper invoice, receipts and bills.