

**'IMPARTING CONSUMER EDUCATION
TO
RURAL WOMEN'**

By

KALPANA. M

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE AND
HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN - DEEMED UNIVERSITY, COIMBATORE - 641 043

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Certified as Bonafide Research Work

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Introduction

I INTRODUCTION

"A Consumer is the most honoured, visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption on our work. He is the purpose for it. He is not an outsider on our business. He is a 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

Consumers are the largest economic group in any country. They are the central point of all our economic activities. Marketing starts with the consumer and ends with the consumer. Satisfaction of the consumers becomes the most important role of a business enterprise (Sharma, 1995). The business of being a consumer is a part and parcel of every one's life. Any one who spends money, buying goods and services is a consumer (Batish, 1980).

The consumer is a resourceful enterprenur who obtains income from sale of his labour and uses the income to purchase goods and services to the full satisfaction of his wants (Neelakanta, 1998). In olden times, consumers were the most important persons in the economic and social set up of the country. It was appropriate to describe them as very important persons and they were favouring the businessmen by purchasing their goods and services. They constituted the largest public body in the country.

Today, the consumer is the forgotten man of the modern Indian economy. He is the least organised and the most centrifugal element in the circle of investment, production, sale and consumption and is generally taken for granted as one who has anyhow to buy in order to live (Thirupurasundari, 1998).

The Indian consumer today has been the victim of economic situation in terms of high price, non-availability of branding goods, adulteration, bogus brands, names and works deceptive packages, misleading advertisement, speculative hoarding of essential commodities, black marketing, wrong weights and measures, aggressive salesmanship, defective manufacturing and high profiteering (Rajalakshmi, 1990).

In India, the problem of exploitation of the people by the people or even by the government is rampant. The seller of goods and services is seen profits; all sorts of malpractices are being adopted by the businessman at the cost of consumer's interest (Joseph, 1998). Most of the consumers almost everyday are being duped in weighing and measuring. They have to pay more than what actually they get (Gupta, 1992).

In our country, cheating process, substandard goods, false weights and measures and other malpractices are prevalent in urban and rural markets (Patel, 1994). The consumers generally experience shortage of goods, many consumers are illiterate and they have different cultures and customs. So they fail to organise themselves to protect their legitimate consumer rights (Thakur, 1994).

Consumer Protection in the larger context, would refer to some kind of safeguard for the members of society from all sorts of malpractices and exploitative deeds of market operators (Sarma, 1985).

"Consumer Education" or "Protection" is referred as "Consumerism" or "Consumer Movement" which is concerned with an organized effort of consumers seeking redress, and remedy for dissatisfaction that they have accumulated in the acquisition of their standard of living (Thiripurasundari, 1998).

The Consumer Movement has remained in its infancy and has grown to extent in some metropolitan cities only (Kalpana, 1992). Consumer Education must seek to promote consumer consciousness among citizens. They must be sensitized to the fact that public services and goods must

be of a standard quality and each citizen has the right to complain against faulty goods and services (Narayanaswamy, 1994).

Besides the protection granted under Indian Constitution, there are various acts which protect the consumers from various abuses prevailing in the market place (Joseph, 1998). Particularly the Consumer Protection Act 1986, provides a simple, speedy and inexpensive remedy to the consumers. The Act seeks to promote the basic rights of consumers.

In India, where illiteracy is still spread, awareness of rights of consumers ought to be very little. Consumer Education in the modern era should arise, awake and help to solve all problems. In the developed countries, the consumers are highly educated, well informed and sophisticated about their requirements. Supply of products is in abundance. Even if some of the population is literate, they are illiterates in Consumer Education (Mathew, 1990).

The buying practices of the majority of the consumers present unfortunately a very unsatisfactory picture. They lack the basic economic knowledge regarding the market and their role as consumers in affecting price and

the working of the economic system. Their buying practices are on the whole irrational, and unintelligent because they are poorly informed regarding availability of products and methods of identifying quality.

The Consumers in India basically lack knowledge of sources of reliable information. As a consequence, many waste their time in idle shopping. Lack of information is thus a great handicap. The role of homemaker as the marketing agent of the family assures significance for the welfare and happiness of the family. So it is important that the urban and rural homemakers should know their rights and duties as consumers (Varghese, 1985).

Consumer Education and awareness are necessary for self-insurance against unfair trade practices. This can be done only through creating awareness about their rights and educating them about the various Acts and measures that protect their interests and welfare. Hence the investigator made an attempt to impart Consumer Education to the selected rural homemakers with the following objectives:

1. To find out the consumer behaviour pattern of the selected rural families.
2. To analyse the types of problems faced by the rural homemakers.

3. To create awareness regarding their rights and responsibilities of wise consumer buyers and
4. To impart consumer education to the selected homemakers.

It is hoped that the findings of the study will be of immense help to Indian consumers to become better managers of their resources of money, time and energy to derive maximum satisfaction from the limited resources.

Review of Literature

II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature pertaining to the study on "Imparting Consumer Education to Rural Women" is reviewed under the following headings:

- A. Meaning and Definition of Consumer
- B. Problems Faced by the Indian Consumer
- C. Consumer Protection in India
- D. History and Development of Consumerism
- E. Consumer Education in India

A. MEANING AND DEFINITION OF CONSUMER

Mithani (1982) defines consumer as a person who consumes goods and services for the satisfaction of his wants. A consumer is one who acts on his own behalf buying things for his own or his family use and buying them because he wants them himself, not because the firm or the government can use them (Lancaster, 1973). They are the people who purchase goods and services for their own or family use and enjoyment (Bhanet, 1998).

According to the Consumer Protection Act (1986) Consumer means any person who

- buys any goods for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised, or under any system of deferred payment and includes any

user of such goods for consideration paid or promised or partly paid or partly promised or under any system of deferred payment when such use is made with the approval of such person, but does not include a person who obtains such goods for resale or for any commercial purpose. (or)

- hires any services for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment and includes any beneficiary of such services other than the person who hires the services for consideration paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment when such services are availed of with the approval of the first mentioned person (Majumdar, 1991).

B. PROBLEMS FACED BY THE INDIAN CONSUMER

Consumers are faced with numerous problems in the market place and in many cases they are harmed physically, mentally or financially. Added to the list of problems confronting the consumers is that of ignorance. Ignorance in this context is based upon Webster's definition "Resulting from or showing lack of knowledge or awareness of particular things" (Thiripurasundari, 1998).

In the market place, a consumer is often cheated in terms of quantity and is thereby deprived of getting full value of money. It is estimated that consumers are losing atleast Rs.2,000 crores every year, in fact, they are paying Rs.1,600 crores more than they should because of defective weights and measures (Kalpana, 1992; Gandhi, 1994).

The consumers are facing many artificial problems like shortage of goods, hoarding, adulteration, profiteering, goods with defective weights and measures, lack of credit facilities and competitive price (Rayudu, 1980).

Today, however the common man's food due to adulteration contains 25 to 30 per cent poison, leading to instant or slow death through all sorts of diseases when the unscrupulous trader palms off spurious stuff very clearly the consumer should do everything possible to save his life (Ghosh, 1985).

According to the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, an article of food shall be deemed to be adulterated:

- (a) If the article sold by a vendor is not of the nature, substance or quality demanded by the purchaser and is to his prejudice or it is not of the nature substance or quality which it purports or it represented to be.
- (b) If the article contains any other substance which affects or if the article is so processed as to affect, injuriously the nature, substance or quality thereof.
- (c) If the article had been prepared, packed or kept under insanitary conditions whereby it has become contaminated or injurious to health.
- (d) If the article is obtained from a diseased animal.
- (e) If the article contains any poisonous or other ingredient which renders it injurious to health.

- (f) If the article contains any prohibited preservatives or permitted preservative in excess of the prescribed limits.
- (g) If any colouring matter other than that prescribed in respect thereof and in amounts not within the prescribed limits of variability is present in the article (Swaminadhan, 1985).

HEALTH HAZARDS OF ADULTRATION

Adulterant	Food Article	Effects of health
Argemone oil	Oils and Fats	Epidemic dropsy, glaucoma, blindness, cardiac arrest.
Pesticide residue	All types of foods	Acute or chronic poisoning with damage to nervous and organs.
Mineral oil (Used motor oil)	Oils and black pepper	Diarrhoea, vomiting, cancer.
Methyl/Alcohol	Alcoholic liquors	Blurred vision, blindness, death.
Lead Chromate	Turmeric and powdered mixed spices	Anaemia, abortion, para-lysis, brain damage
Lead	Tap water, some processed food	Lead poisoning causing foot-drop anaemia, mental retardation
Kesari dal	Pulses and Besan	Brain damage, paralysis of legs

A consumer is continuously bombarded with advertisements to the point of accepting anything as good (Mandana, 1985). An advertisement is defined as paid for

communication, addressed to the public or a section of it, the purpose of which is to influence and opinions or behaviour of those to whom it is addressed (Rebello, 1998).

Advertising has become an instrument to draw our attention away from a product and to focus our attention on factors related to the product that in promoting the sale of washing soap, the advertiser draws the consumer's attention to "FREE WITH THIS PACKAGE" soap tray or brush or even a plastic bucket. The buyer's attention is drawn away from the actual commodity and is focussed on the "FREE" article supplied to the extent that the buyer considers it a good, buy it he can obtain the FREE item together with soap. Such an advertisement does not advert but diverts the attention of the buyers (Mandana, 1985).

Mehta (1973) states that as production expands less rapidly prices are bound to rise. Price rise is the lack of co-ordination between the centre and state. The prices of all commodities, especially the essential commodities increased tremendously. The most serious problem which confronts the consumer is that of getting good quality stuff.

Hamsagar (1989) declares that as long as there are people who are willing to buy poor quality goods at cheaper

price, there would always be manufacturers who would like to produce such goods. Consumer has to look upon quality as an all embracing need of consumer satisfaction starting from socio-political system to common goods and services of daily need.

The warning came from the former Prime Minister Thiru. Chandra Shekar (1991) conveys that the hoarding and black marketing create psychosis of shortages and become looming threat of the country. The traders always pleaded their helplessness over the higher prices they charge to their buyer's and attribute the increase to higher transport and input costs.

C. CONSUMER PROTECTION IN INDIA

Consumer protection in our country can be grouped under legal measures, public distribution of essential commodities and people's resistance to unjustifiable price rise in essential commodities and co-operation with government in taking action against hoarders, profiteers and other anti-social elements.

On the legislative side, a lot of work has been done and by and large consumer protection with those in the industrialised countries (Ansari, 1980).

The problem of consumerism is complex and calls for an indepth study. It is a world wide movement. Many advanced countries have taken suitable measures to protect consumer interests practically. Everyone is a consumer of varied goods and services and hence, protecting the consumer's interest, amounts of protecting the larger interests of society itself. Correct weights and measures, good quality products and at reasonable fair prices, honest dealings, and proper distribution system, are the issues involved in any consumer protection movement (Sharma, 1985).

Relationship between the buyer and seller has resulted in extensive legislative change in Consumer Protection Law. It is necessary for the consumer to familiarize themselves with these changes to obtain maximum benefits (Newell et al., 1987).

There are some legislative measures to promote the interest of the consumers. They are as follows:

- 1. Agricultural Products (Grading and Marketing Act, 1937).**

This Act provides for quality certification popularly known as "AGMARK" for Agricultural commodities. The certification scheme is voluntary for domestic but mandatory for export purposes.

2. Drugs and Commodities Act, 1940.

The purpose of this law is to regulate the production, trade distribution, import and export of drugs and cosmetics which are upto the required standards but also being sold under misbranding.

3. Emblems and Names Act, (1950).

This Act prohibits the use of specified names and emblems or official seal for general public and specially for advertising purposes.

4. Forward Market (Regulation) Act, (1952).

It regulates forward trading in various commodities to which regulatory provisions to this act have been applied. It takes action to curb unhealthy speculation. Keeps watch over price trade trends of a number of commodities.

**5. Indian Standard Institution (Certified Mark Act, 1952).
(Change to Bureau of Indian Standard Act, 1986).**

This Act controls the standards of various goods to encourage standardization. This law guarantees the replacement of substandard goods which are not according to the prescribed standard when carrying the ISI mark.

6. Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954.

This Act tends to prevent advertisement which claim miracle or magical cure of diabetes, cancer, arthritis, asthma, sexual impotency, blindness, polio, etc which are difficult to cure.

7. Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.

It prohibits manufacturing and sale of adulterated food. Adulterated food includes article of cheaper substance injurious to health, contaminated filthy, rotten decomposed or diseased etc and includes drink for human consumption under this Act, use of food colours derived from coal tar has been banned Prevention of Food Adulteration Act also places responsibility on the consumer for checking adulteration by acting as food inspector provided certain conditions are satisfied.

8. Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

This law provides for the regulation/control of production and distribution of essential commodities by the government so that scarce commodities are available for consumption. It provides for rules and orders to govern the manufacture, distribution, storage, prices, etc., of essential commodities.

9. Companies Act, 1956

Company legislation in India protects from monopoly of large corporation by developing a system of checks and counts.

10. Standards of Weight and Measures Act 1956 and 1976.

They determine the system of measurement also called metrology of various weights and measures packaged commodities. Rules framed under the Act provides for printing of necessary details on the packaged commodity with effect from May 1984. All the packed commodities for sale have to be packed according to metric system of weight and measurement.

11. Trade and Merchandise Act 1958

This law provides for the registration of trademarks of manufactured goods so as not only to protect the business but also the consumer being cheated due to non-identified products.

12. Monopolistic and Restrictive Trade Practices Act - MRTTP (1984)

This Act, has been enacted with the objective of curbing monopolistic and restrictive trade practices. Before 1984, Amendent the MRTTP Act contained no provision for the

protection of consumer from unfair trade practices, such as deceptive and misleading advertising hoarding of goods and supply of unsafe and hazardous products.

The Act was directed against the restrictive and monopolies trade practices and the common interest was sought to be protected by promoting competition and curbing anti competitive activities of manufacturers and dealers.

13. Hire Purchase Act, 1972.

It was passed to save the customer from exploitation by seller / owner and regulate the rights and duties of both the parties.

**14. The Household Electrical Appliances
(Quality Control Order 1976, Amended in 1981)**

It prohibits the manufacturers from sale of household electrical appliances which do not conform to relevant ISI standards and requires the manufacturers to take certificate from appropriate authority.

15. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

The Consumer Protection Act 1986 provides a simple, speedy and inexpensive, remedy to the consumers. The Act seeks to promote the basic rights of consumers and

provides a three-tier machinery for redressal of consumer grievances, known as Consumer Dispute Redressal Agencies (CDRAS).

Objectives of this Act:

- a. To provide better protection of the rights of the consumers and
- b. To promote voluntary consumer movement and to safeguard the interests of consumers.

On the federal government level, there are a number of agencies which try to protect the consumer against fraud and dangerous products. Their functions are so defined that sometimes several of them might be involved in the same case.

Some of the typical measures taken by city and state government to protect the consumer are -

- a. Regulating food - dispensing establishments for instance, restaurants and meat markets.
- b. Inspecting meats and milks.
- c. Regulating the canning of foods.
- d. Controlling the bacteriological count in public swimming pools.
- e. Preventing the use of sulphur containing arsenic in the spraying of fruits and vegetables.

D. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF CONSUMERISM

According to Philip Kotler () consumerism is a social movement seeking to augment the rights and powers of buyers in relation to sellers. It is important to remember that sellers too enjoy certain rights in most societies, with buyers. Consumerism demands availability of adequate information on quality of goods, price, conditions of production and sale use of goods, expected performance of goods, safety precautions and special care and guidance on the use of sophisticated and costly consumer durable (Singh and Singh, 1995).

Consumerism can be defined as social force within the environment designed to aid and protect the consumer by exerting legal, moral and economic pressure on business (Cararens and Hills, 1970). It is a social movement that seeks to increase the rights and powers of consumers, in the last 30 years. It has emerged as a major political force. Twenty years ago, consumerism was much more visible. Consumers staged frequent boycotts and protest marches and generated much media attention (William, and Perreault, 1982).

Consumerism has traditionally been viewed as the set of activities of government business, independent

organisations and concerned consumers that are designed to protect the rights of consumers. The development of the consumer movement spans approximately 80 years and can be roughly categorized into four eras: (Mowen, 1995).

The first era occurred in the early 1900s and concentrated on the need for a banking system, product purity, postal rates, anti-trust and product shortages. Emphasis was on business protection against unfair practices.

The second era lasted from the 1930s to the 1950s. Important issues were product safety, bank failure, labelling, misrepresentation, defective advertising etc.

The third era began in the early 1960s and continued until 1980. It dealt with all areas of marketing and had a great impact on business.

During the 1980s, fourth era has emerged with consumerism entering a mature phase as a result of the dramatic gains of the 1960s and 1970s as well as an increased emphasis on business deregulation (Evans, J.R., Berman, B. 1987).

In India, the basic reasons for the origin of consumerism have been quite different as compared to the

west. As a result, the thrust of consumer movement in India has been the availability, purity and pricing of essential articles. Since the vast majority of consumers in India have to keep a precarious balance between income and expenditure, the need to protect the interest of the consumer in these directions will assume greater significance. Therefore, consumerism has to be accepted as an enduring phenomenon in our country (Thomas, T., Neelamegkam, S. 1979).

Consumerism is now in a period of maturity the decade of the 1980s undergone and will continue to undergo much less activism than the 1960s and 1970s. This is due to several factors: the current level and quality of self-regulation. The success of consumerism, the increased conservation of congress and the American people and the importance of other issues (Bloom and Gregar, 1981).

E. CONSUMER EDUCATION IN INDIA

The Consumer Education in India is discussed under the following headings:

1. Meaning and Definition of Consumer Education
2. Need for Consumer Education
3. Objectives of Consumer Education

1. Meaning and Definition of Consumer Education

The study of "Consumer Education and Protection" has come to be known as "Consumerism" and is concerned with constructive and responsible activity among citizens towards fighting injustices and sensitizing of the public conscience. This becomes necessary in today's society because too many people are unconcerned and have turned their backs to the many new concerns of a fast changing society. Too few are concerned enough to speak and to organise in the spirit of true citizenship. We must accept that the man who buys in the black market is as guilty as the man who sells in the black market ~~and~~ both are guilty of unconcern towards their fellow citizens. Unconcern, lack of interest and non-involvement in the life of the community and in civic affairs can only lead to decay of society. A toothless citizenship will only lead to insensitive government, irresponsible manufacture, trade and commerce and a decline in the real quality of our lives and society in general (Mandana, 1977).

Consumer education is the process of gaining the knowledge and skills needed in managing consumer resources and taking actions to influence the factors which affect consumer decisions.

As well as being influenced by a wide range of programmatic sources, the concepts and skills implied in this definition came from a variety of academic disciplines, including economics, sociology, psychology, political science, mathematics, and the applied areas of home economics and business education, among others. Consumer education is multi-disciplinary by design, drawing from and contributing to a number of fields.

A unique element of consumer education which differentiates it from other areas of study is its focus on the consumer decisions which relate to interactions between consumers and producers in the economic system. This distinction in part explains the centrality of the field of economics to consumer education. Consumers need knowledge of the economic system within which consumer producer transactions take place (Bannister and Monsma, 1985).

Consumer Education, therefore is a vital necessity in today's business of living. Thus education and awareness must accompany the process of making regulation and legislation. In fact, Consumer Education and dissemination of information should form part of any policy to help the consumer (Pandiya, 1989). Narayanswami, (1987) opines that consumer education should start with the mean in the street and those in the lower strata of society.

Pandya (1987) quotes that the main purpose of consumer education is to give a better standard of living to all citizens with constant improvement in working conditions, employment opportunities ~~at all~~ levels. Hence people have more money and desire to buy a wide variety of products, there is a growing awareness of the need to teach consumers as to how to use their money wisely in order to live well. In other words, consumer education is a preparation for everyday living because it helps the people to make intelligent choices, when consumers have proper knowledge and information. They are able to buy wisely, use more intelligently and get greater satisfaction from their effort (Engel et al., 1990).

Consumer education is defined as a hearing process whereby the consumer acquires the skills and knowledge to use his or her financial resources wisely in the malpractice (Evans and Berman, 1985).

Rajalakshmi (1990) views that imparting consumer education helps the Indian consumer to become a better manager of his resources of money, goods, time and energy to derive maximum satisfaction from the limited resources of his disposal. It aids the consumer to become a wise buyer of goods and services and to become informed and concious citizen.

According to Bannister and Monsma (1985) Consumer Education means the process by which consumers:

- * develop skills to make informed decisions in the purchase of goods and services in light of personal values, maximum utilisation of resources, available alternatives, ecological considerations and changing economic conditions.
- * become knowledgeable about the laws, rights, and methods of resource in order to participate effectively and self-confidently in the market place and take appropriate action to seek consumer redress and
- * develop an understanding of the consumer-citizen role in the economic, social and government systems and how to influence those systems to make them responsive to consumers' needs.

The following definition of consumer education is reflective of such formulations which broaden the traditional emphasis of the field. It evolved from an analysis of numerous definitions found in curriculum materials and programme descriptions as well as from discussions with educators from a wide variety of educational settings.

2. Need For Consumer Education

Consumer Education is needed for improving consumer's position and protecting consumer's rights and interests. It is also needed for promoting social civilization and social progress (Qix, 1997).

With the development of a market economy, more brands and varieties of goods and services are available to consumers. The consumer markets have greatly changed, especially today, rapidly developed science and technology penetrate into consumers daily lives through numerous new products and services. This situation requires consumers be intelligent and understand modern consumption knowledge. Otherwise they cannot enjoy the benefits brought by modern science and technology and may be ripped off or hurt in the market. Thus, it is necessary to educate consumers to improve their consumption knowledge bases and to raise their self protection. So that they can become more competent and smart consumers (Yin, 1992).

The market economy is about equal competition. Both the producer and consumer are competing in the same market environment. But the consumer is often the weaker

party, since the market system mechanism and laws are just starting to be developed. The markets are flooded with face for poor quality goods. Consumer's rights and interests are often infringed upon. In order to strengthen consumer's position in the market for fair competition, consumer education should be widely offered to allow consumers to acquire knowledge of modern consumer goods and changing markets. It also helps to increase consumer's ability of self protection and utilisation in consumption (Yin, 1997).

3. Objectives of Consumer Education

The purpose of Consumer Education is not only to enhance consumer's knowledge of commodities and market, to improve their ability of self-protection to be an intelligent consumer but also to make consumers to conduct healthy and socially desirable consumption activities.

The contents of consumer education include not only modern knowledge of commodities, market and consumption, but also consumption value and social ethics, it includes not only knowledge of laws, but also that of environment protection to improve their awareness of environment protection. So that they can preserve the beautiful consumption environment consciously (Yin and Yin, 1998).

According to Mandana (1977) the purpose of consumer education is to increase the consumer consciousness of the younger generation and to teach them the ways of establishing every consumer's right to safety, choice, information and redress. The functions of consumer education can be broadly set out as follows:

- * Achieving competence to live within one's income budgeting and saving.
- * Achieving competence to determine the best ways and best products to buy.
- * Developing an understanding of market facilities including co-operatives.
- * Understanding credit use and credit costs - the use of cash or hire purchase when buying.
- * Learning to use and utilise community facilities - what government services are available for the citizen's use.
- * Developing an ability to understand and judge consumer information - how to view and analyse advertising.
- * Fighting exploitation - practical steps to identify, confront and eliminate consumer exploitation.
- * Knowing the common adulterants used in the adulteration of foods, drugs and cosmetics and the simple methods of testing to detect the presence of these adulterants.
- * Knowing the basic provisions of the laws enacted for the protection of consumers and the authorities concerned for the enforcement of these laws.

The above noted functions of consumer education are for the improvement in the quality of life of the

individual citizen. However, this by itself is not enough for every citizen related to the community in which he lives and in a larger sense, is a reciprocal of the nation. Therefore, the concerns of the community and the nation become the concerns of every individual citizen. In this context there are several subjects that should be the concern of every Indian.

The primary focus of consumer education historically has been to teach individuals to become more skilled and rational buyers. Existing marketplace conditions have set the framework for discussion; and consideration of the potential influence of consumers, beyond the indirect impact of product choice decisions, has been extremely limited (Willett, S.L., 1979).

The current and future needs of consumers demand a broader view of the consumer role than has traditionally been presented. Individuals and groups who participate in consumer education programmes should gain competence in the knowledge and skills needed to make decisions and take actions as informed and responsible consumers in a broad spectrum of consumer behaviour modes. Necessary roles for consumers range from learning to cope with their present

circumstances to participating as citizens to influence change. The potential impact of consumer education on the consumer behaviour are discussed below: (Willett, 1979).

- * **Coping:** includes applying basic consumer survival skills to everyday situations. The ability to cope with current circumstances is an important need for all consumers, but it must not be the final goal of consumer education, especially where the existing conditions should be changed.
- * **Questioning:** is an important analytical skill which encourages a think-for-yourself attitude. It teaches consumers to ask questions before purchasing and to challenge misinformation and fraud. Questioning may result in a decision not to buy.
- * **Planning:** includes the process of managing financial resources after considering goals, needs and available resources. It includes obtaining income as well as spending, saving, investing, borrowing, protecting and tax-paying.
- * **Purchasing:** is the application of the decision making process to buying goods and services. It involves seeking and using information, considering alternatives

and consequences and selecting the product or service by using appropriate criteria.

- * **Conserving:** encourages consumer actions that preserve or use resources efficiently rather than wastefully.
- * **Participating as citizens:** supports consumer involvement in business, government and community policy decisions. The process includes questioning, analyzing and suggesting alternative solutions to consumer issues and problems.
- * **Influencing change:** promotes an awareness that consumers, through active participation, can exercise power to modify those policies, institutions and systems within society which affect consumer interests.

Consumer education emphasizes consumer rights under the law and business terms in the market place. It aims at protecting the interests and rights of the consumer-buyer by imparting knowledge on various malpractices. It helps the consumer to make intelligent choices, understand the mechanisms and compare qualities of goods in the market. It attempts to increase the purchasing power of the consumer by stabilising the price of the goods (Rajalakshmi, R. 1990).

The education of the consumer as buyer must deal with specific commodities and services as means of satisfying wants. They must be informed of the goods that are available and the purpose it serves. Not only must the consumer be informed regarding the purpose of goods and the qualities to meet these purposes, but they must also be able to identify and compare the qualities of goods as they appear in the market.

Methodology

III METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the study on "Imparting Consumer Education to Rural Women" comprised of the following major headings:

- A. Household Survey
- B. Conducting Action Oriented Programmes to Create Awareness and Knowledge on Consumer Education
- C. Evaluating the Impact of the Programmes

A. Household Survey

A household survey was conducted in Nanjundapuram village in Coimbatore city to find out the consumer behaviour pattern of the selected rural women and to educate them to become more skilled and rational buyers.

According to Gupta (1995) a survey or experiment is a device of obtaining the desired data. A survey is a process of collecting data from existing population units with no particular control over factor that may affect the population characteristics of interest in the study. Thus conducting the survey helps to get a dependable and reliable data. It is an important part of research. Surveys are the most popular device of obtaining the desired data.

The household survey consisted of the following steps:

1. Selection of the Area
2. Selection of the Sample
3. Selection of the Method
4. Conducting the Study and
5. Analysis of the Data

1. Selection of the Area

Nanjundapuram village was selected for the present study, located 15 kms from Coimbatore town. This village was identified by the investigator since the Community and Social Service activities are being carried out by the Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore and also due to the easy accessibility and co-operation rendered by the selected respondents.

2. Selection of the Sample

One hundred homemakers belonging to the low and middle income group were selected for the study by simple random sampling.

According to Kothari (1994), "Simple Random Sampling is one in which every item of an Universe has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample".

3. Selection of the Method

Interview schedule was administered to the selected rural women to collect the required information for the study.

According to Rao (1993) "An interview schedule is a list of questions which helps to collect data from the field. This is generally filled in by the enumerator himself". In the words of Kothari (1994) an interview method is one, where the interviewer asks questions in a face-to-face contact to the other person or persons.

Sadhu and Singh (1992) state that pretest provides not only a test of clarity of questions and respondents but also affords the possibility of discovering different aspects of study which are not anticipated in the planning stage. Hence a pilot study was conducted among twenty home makers residing at Nanjundapuram village for the clarity and feasibility of the schedule.

4. Conducting the Study

The investigator developed rapport with the selected rural homemakers and explained to them about the purpose of the study and the place from where she had come from.

The respondents were interviewed with the help of a schedule. The schedule called for information on the aspects related to the socio economic status, purchasing behaviour, problems faced, etc, and is given in Appendix I.

5. Analysis of the Data

The data collected are presented and discussed under Chapter IV - Results and Discussion.

B. CONDUCTING ACTION-ORIENTED PROGRAMMES

Dahama (1994) reveals that education is the process of bringing desirable change into the behaviour of human beings. It can also be defined as the process of imparting or acquiring knowledge and habits through instruction or study. The investigator conducted many action oriented programmes to impart consumer education among the rural women. They are as follows:

1. Informal talk
2. Meeting
3. Exhibition
4. Street play and
5. Video programmes

C. EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ACTION PROGRAMMES

Best and Khan (1993) opines that evaluation is concerned with a more immediate application seeking to determine on programme in terms of carefully defined and agreed upon objectives or values. It implies some judgement of the effectiveness social utility or desirability of the product, process or programme and is not concerned with generalisation that may be extended to other settings.

A checklist was administered to the sample to assess the extent of knowledge gained and their awareness towards various areas of consumer issues and is given in Appendix II.

According to James and Sally (1989) a checklist is simply a method of providing the respondent a number of options from which to choose (i.e) asking respondents to answer "Yes" or "No" to a question or to check the category to which they belong.

Results and Discussion

IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigator made an earnest effort to create consumer awareness and also to impart consumer education among the selected rural women residing at Nanjundapuram village in Coimbatore. The aim of the present study is to find out the purchasing practices and their awareness towards consumerism. The findings of the study are presented and discussed under the following headings:

- A. Household Survey
- B. Conducting Action Oriented Programmes to Create Awareness and ^{Impact} Knowledge on Consumer Education
- C. Evaluating the Impact of the Programmes

A. HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

A household survey was conducted by the researcher among one hundred rural homemakers residing at Nanjundapuram village in Coimbatore. The household survey constituted the following headings:

1. Socio-Economic Background
2. Family Expenditure Pattern and
3. Consumer Buying Behaviour Pattern

1. Socio-Economic Background:

The socio-economic background of the selected rural homemakers is dealt with the following aspects:

- a. Religion
- b. Type and size of the family
- c. Nature of home-ownership
- d. Age of the heads and homemakers
- e. Educational status of heads and homemakers
- f. Occupational status of the heads and homemakers and
- g. Family income

a. Religion:

From the survey, it was observed that majority of the respondents (96 per cent) were Hindus. Only 2 per cent of them were muslims and christians respectively.

b. Type and size of the family:

Table I gives information about the type and size of the selected families.

TABLE I
TYPE AND SIZE OF THE FAMILY

S.No	Type and Size	Percentage
i	Type of the family:	
	Nuclear	86
	Joint	14
ii	Size of the family:	
	Small (1-3)	28
	Medium (4-6)	59
	Large (7 and above)	13

It is evident from Table I that most of them (86 per cent) represented nuclear family. The present living condition, pursuit of different types of occupation and current socio-economic trends were the reasons for the option of nuclear families.

Regarding the size of the family, around 59 per cent of the families consisted of four members. Only 13 per cent of them were belonging to the large family.

c. Nature of home ownership:

Around 68 per cent were residing in their own houses. This may be due to the fact that most of the heads and homemakers preferred to settle family life in their rural areas of Coimbatore city.

d. Age of the heads and homemakers:

The age-wise distribution of the heads and the homemakers are shown in Table II.

TABLE II
AGE OF THE HEADS AND HOMEMAKERS

S.No	Age (in years)	%
i Heads:		
	Below 30	14
	30 - 40	27
	40 - 50	32
	50 and above	27
ii Homemakers:		
	Below 30	25
	30 - 40	37
	40 - 50	23
	50 and above	15

The data reveals that 32 per cent of the heads and 23 per cent of the homemakers were in the age group of 40 - 50 years, whereas 27 per cent of the heads and 15 per cent of the homemakers were above 50 years.

e. Educational status of the heads and homemakers:

Table III gives details about educational status of the heads and homemakers.

TABLE III
EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE HEADS AND HOMEMAKERS

S.No	Particulars	%
i	Heads:	
	Illiterates	5
	Primary	19
	Secondary	25
	High school and Higher secondary	44
	Graduates	7
ii	Homemakers:	
	Illiterates	13
	Primary	21
	Secondary	27
	High school and Higher secondary	28
	Graduates	11

From Table III, it is clear that only five per cent of the heads and 13 per cent of homemakers were illiterates. Nearly 44 per cent of the heads and 28 per cent of the homemakers respectively studied till higher secondary level. Only very few of the heads (7 per cent) and the homemakers (11 per cent) were graduates.

f. Occupational status of the heads and homemakers:

Table IV gives information about the occupational status of the heads and homemakers.

TABLE IV
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF THE HEADS AND HOMEMAKERS

S.No	Particulars	%
i	Heads:	
	Coolies	39
	Mill workers	28
	Business men	12
	Officers	16
	Professionals	5
ii	Homemakers:	
	Full-time homemakers	100

Occupational status of the families is a major factor to decide the standard of living of the family. Nearly 39 per cent of the heads of the families were coolies. Around 28 per cent of them were employed as labourers in textile mills in Coimbatore. Only 5 per cent of them were engaged in professional jobs. All the selected rural women were engaged in homemaking activities.

g. Family income:

Table V depicts the quantum of income received by the families during a month.

TABLE V
FAMILY INCOME

S.No	Family Income (Rs).	%
i	Upto 2,100	46
ii	2,100 < 4,500	39
iii	> 4,500 < 7,500	11
iv	7,500 and above	4

It is revealed from the Table V that forty six percentage of the families represented the low income group as against 50 per cent belonging to the middle income category. Only four per cent of them were from the high income group. (Government of India, 1997).

2. Family Expenditure Pattern:

Family expenditure pattern of the selected families is shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI
FAMILY EXPENDITURE PATTERN

S.No	Contents	%
i	Food	60
ii	Clothing	5
iii	Shelter	12
iv	Education	5
v	Medicine	2
vi	Fuel and light	6
vii	Transport	5
viii	Recreation	4
ix	Savings	1

The above Table reveals that a higher percentage of the family's income (60 per cent) was spent on food. Around 5 per cent was spent for clothing, children's education and recreational purposes respectively. Nearly 12 per cent of the income was spent for shelter.

3. Consumer Buying Behaviour Pattern:

When a consumer buys a product, his aims are desire for security, rest, comfort, curiosity, self-

prevervation, fashion etc. People purchase products urged by mental and economic forces, which create a desire and this desire is satisfied by the articles displayed for sale motive is an inner urge that prompts one to action; it is not a mere desire. The stimulated desire is called a motive.

Knowledge of the buying motives of consumers is essential for a marketers. The changes in the market are brought by the consumers. The needs and desire of the consumers and their buying behaviour greatly depend upon their income, social status, psychology etc.

According to Pillai and Bagavathi (1997) "Buyer behaviour is all psychological, social and physical behaviour of potential customers as they evaluate, purchase, consume and tell others about the product and services".

The consumer buying behaviour pattern of the selected rural homemakers is discussed under the following headings:

- a. Sources of information
- b. Satisfaction about the mass media
- c. General factors considered while purchase
- d. Factors considered for buying specific consumer goods
- e. Problems faced while purchase
- f. Purchasing practices of food items
- g. Purchasing practices of clothina items

a. Sources of Information:

Table VII reveals the media through which the availability of the commodities in the market are known to the homemakers.

TABLE VII
SOURCES OF INFORMATION *

S.No	Sources	%
i	Radio	16
ii	Television	57
iii	Salesmanship	9
iv	Friends	43

* Multiple response

Nearly 57 per cent of the homemakers came to know about availability of the consumer products through television, since television is the most popular mass media with the capacity of attracting a greater segment of the population. Friends served as learning source for 43 per cent of the homemakers. Only 9 per cent of them were well informed of the products through salesmanship.

b. Satisfaction about the mass media:

Among one hundred homemakers, a greater percentage (63 per cent) were dissatisfied with the mass media due to the misleading advertisements and false information. Only 37 per cent were satisfied with the present system of communication.

c. **General factors considered while purchase:**

Table VIII gives details regarding the factors looked while purchasing commodities from the shops.

TABLE VIII

GENERAL FACTORS CONSIDERED WHILE PURCHASE *

S.No	Contents	%
i	Quality	53
ii	Price	67
iii	Discount	13
iv	Quantity	29
v	Brand	47
vi	Labelling	22
vii	Gifts and compliments	11
viii	Guarantee and warranty cards	83

* Multiple response

Guarantee and warranty cards were expected by most of the homemakers (83 per cent). Price was considered as the next major criteria by 67 per cent of the rural homemakers. Only very few of them (13 per cent) were buying consumer products at the time of discount sale (Figure 1).

d. **Factors considered for buying specific consumer goods:**

The various factors considered by the respondents while buying specific consumer goods such as groceries, medicines, cosmetics etc. is discussed in Table IX.

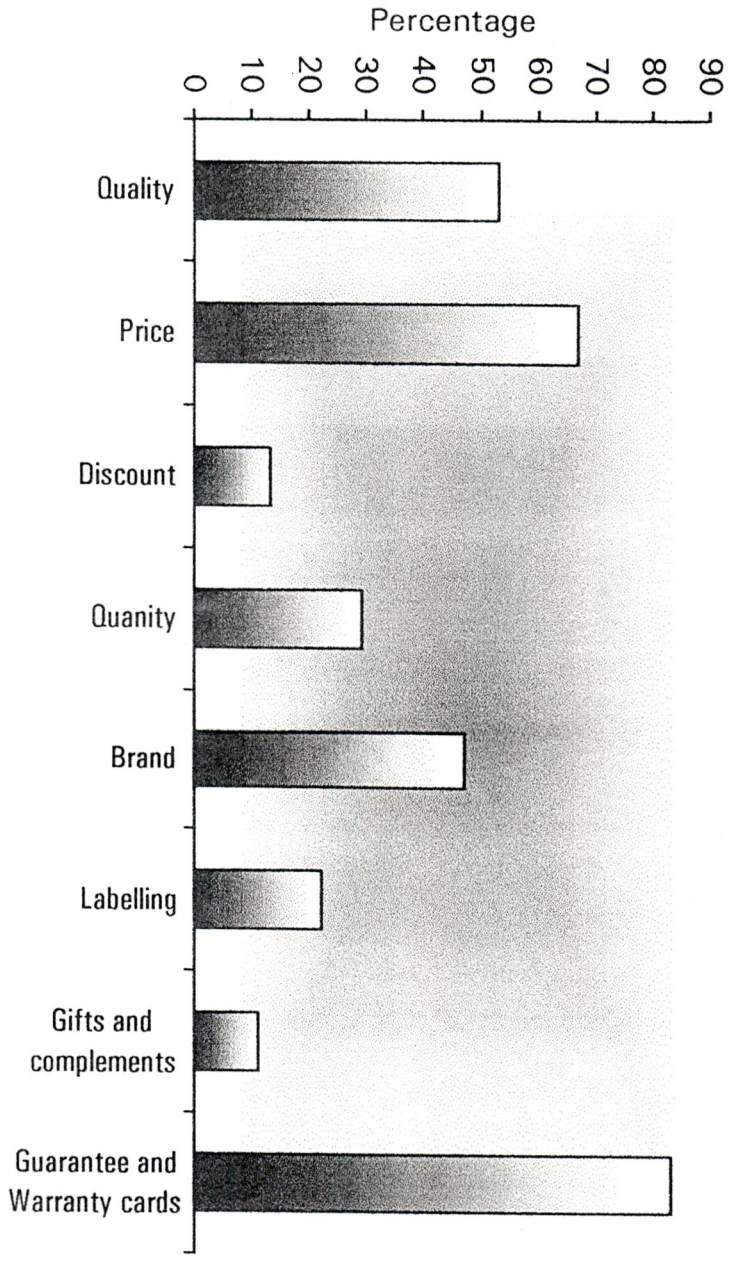


FIGURE 1
GENERAL FACTORS CONSIDERED DURING PURCHASE

Factors

TABLE IX
FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR SPECIFIC CONSUMER GOODS

S.No	Items	Manufact- uring date	Expiry date	Weight	Price at MRP	ISI	Agmark
i	Groceries	-	-	32	41	-	-
ii	Medicine	57	57	-	-	-	-
iii	Cosmetics	-	-	-	21	-	-
iv	Equipment	-	-	-	17	13	-
v	Beverages	-	-	13	-	-	-
vi	Pickles	-	-	11	-	-	-
vii	Biscuits	-	-	-	15	-	-

It is encouraging to note that price and weight were the factors influenced by the respondents while buying certain commodities. Fifty seven per cent of the homemakers were checking the manufacturing and expiry date while buying medicines and the rest of them were not aware of these aspects. It is hightime that consumer education should be given to the respondents to improve their buymanship.

e. Problems faced while purchase:

Table X envisages the type of problems faced by the rural homemakers.

TABLE X
PROBLEMS FACED WHILE PURCHASE *

S.No	Contents	%
i	Poor quality	28
ii	Wrong weights and measures	47
iii	High price	22
iv	Adulteration	14

* Multiple response

Among the selected respondents 47 per cent of the rural homemakers expressed that they were cheated by false weights and measures while buying the fruits, vegetables and groceries. 28 per cent of them repeated about the poor quality products while buying wheat, rice etc supplied in the ration shops (PDS System).

f. Purchasing practices of food items:

Table XI gives the information about the frequency, mode and place of purchase of the food items.

TABLE XI

PURCHASING PATTERN OF FOOD ITEMS

S.No	Items	Frequency				Place of purchase					Mode		Persons involved		
		Daily	Week-ly	Month-ly	Year-ly	Cooper-ative stores	Depart-mental stores	Street vendors	Ration shop	Meat shop	Cash	Credit	Home-maker	Husband	Son
i	Cereals	-	23	67	10	10	66	-	24	-	96	4	32	46	22
ii	Pulses	-	21	54	25	17	83	-	-	-	96	4	32	46	22
iii	Roots & Tubers	11	71	18	-	-	-	100	-	-	81	19	42	46	12
iv	Green leafy vegetables	76	22	2	-	-	-	100	-	-	79	21	68	27	5
v	Other vegetables	46	54	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	81	19	71	19	10
vi	Nuts & Oils	22	78	-	-	13	87	-	-	-	84	16	32	46	22
vii	Fleshy foods	-	57	43	-	-	-	-	-	100	100	-	17	62	21
viii	Beverages	-	31	69	-	24	76	-	-	-	89	11	32	46	22
ix	Sugar and jaggery	-	18	82	-	18	49	-	53	-	95	5	67	14	19

A glance at the Table XI shows that cereals and pulses were purchased by the heads of the families from the departmental stores once in a month on ready cash. Vegetables and other roots and tubers were purchased particularly by the homemakers from the street vendors. Fleshy foods like mutton, chicken were purchased in the meat shop on ready cash.

g. Purchasing practices of clothing items

From Table XII, it is evident that the method and persons involved in purchase of clothing items.

TABLE XII

PURCHASING PRACTICES OF CLOTHING ITEMS

S.No	Items	Frequency			Place of purchase			Method		Persons involved			
		Yearly	Twice a year	Whenever needed	Show room	Textile shop	Cooperative stores	Cash	Credit	Home-maker	Husband	Son	Daughter
1	Saree (N=100)	67	18	15	23	67	10	74	26	66	24	-	10
2	Shirt (N=100)	49	26	25	27	60	13	84	16	12	68	20	-
3	Dhoti (N=38)	26 (68.4%)	12 (31.6%)	-	4 (10.5%)	11 (28.9%)	23 (60.5%)	32 (84%)	6 (15.8%)	-	30 (78.95%)	8 (21.1%)	-
4	Salwar (N=29)	20 (68.9%)	9 (31%)	-	22 (75.9%)	7 (24.2%)	-	29 (100%)	-	18 (62.1%)	7 (24.2%)	-	4 (13.8%)
5	Half saree (N=20)	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	-	-	20 (100%)	-	18 (90%)	2 (10%)	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	-	-
6	Full shirt (N=22)	19 (86.5%)	3 (13.7%)	-	5 (22.8%)	17 (77.6%)	-	19 (86.5%)	3 (13.7%)	12 (54.6%)	7 (31.9%)	-	3 (13.7%)
7	Kaili (N=100)	45	3	52	20	63	7	81	19	5	95	-	-
8	Pant (N=100)	73	17	10	41	59	-	76	24	4	91	5	-
9	Towel and Kerchief (N=100)	25	-	75	64	10	-	69	31	96	44	3	7
10	Blouse (N=100)	17	21	62	83	17	-	89	11	67	13	-	20
11	Under garments (N=100)	10	27	63	69	31	-	100	-	27	32	31	10

From Table XII, it is evident that the common clothing items like saree, shirt, pant, towel, kerchief, etc. were purchased mostly by the head of the families and the homemakers in the textile shops and show rooms on cash purchase. It is a welcoming sign to note that majority of the respondents understood the advantages of buying on cash payment.

B. CONDUCTING ACTION ORIENTED PROGRAMMES TO CREATE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ON CONSUMER EDUCATION

In order to create consumer awareness and to educate the selected rural women on consumer issues, the investigator conducted various action oriented programmes at Nanjundapuram village. Among one hundred homemakers, only 41 per cent of them were willing to participate in the programmes to gain more knowledge in the field of consumerism. They were requested to suggest the areas of information needed for organising the programmes in their village.

Table XIII highlights the topics proposed to impart knowledge on consumer education.

TABLE XIII

ASPECTS OF INFORMATION REQUIRED *

S.No	Areas	N (41)	%
i	Adulteration techniques	23	56.09
ii	Consumer Forum	12	29.23
iii	Standardisation	21	51.24
iv	Consumer Co-operatives	31	75.64
v	Qualities of a wise consumer	22	53.68
vi	Consumer rights and responsibilities	17	41.43

* Multiple response

A higher percentage of the homemakers (76 per cent) aspired to know about the role and significance of consumer cooperatives. Fifty seven per cent of them were very much interested to know about the techniques as how to detect adulteration in food stuffs and the ways of solving these problems. Nearly 54 per cent of them were interested to acquire more knowledge about the qualities and rights and responsibilities of a wise consumer.

Knowledge about Consumer Forum

A greater percentage of the rural women were not aware of the functioning of the Consumer Forum (court) in

Coimbatore. Therefore, it is hightime to create awareness among the respondents about the role of consumer court towards Consumer Protection.

In order to create awareness about various aspects of consumerism, the investigator adopted the following methods:

1. Public meeting
2. Informal talk
3. Exhibition
4. Video programme and
5. Street play

1. Public meeting I

A meeting is said to be public when admission to the meeting is open to all. Under this, there will be an open invitation to the public at large. Any member of the public who is interested in the subject matter for which such meeting is called can participate and contribute his own matter (Rayudu, 1997).

A public meeting was held in Nanjundapuram village on 10.2.99 to involve the villagers and rural women to participate and gain knowledge on consumerism. Dr. Selvaraj, President, Tamil Nadu General Worker's Welfare Federation and

Dr. R. Rajalakshmi, Reader, Family Resource Management, Avinashilingam University and Thiru. Sundarajan, Lion's Club of Golden City, Coimbatore were the chief guests of the day. The former explained the role of women as wise consumers. Dr. Rajalakshmi pointed out the problems faced such as adulteration, black marketing and hoarding etc, while buying things in the market place. Thiru. Sundarajan greeted the audience. Around 50 rural homemakers, twenty men and thirty university students were benefited by this programme. (Plate I)

Public Meeting II

Awareness through the Celebration of World Consumer Day

World Consumer Day was celebrated on 17.3.99 in the University campus. Dr. (Tmt). R. Rajalakshmi, Reader, Family Resource Management welcomed the gathering. Mrs. Thanuja, Research scholar spoke on the significance of the World Consumer Day. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, Chancellor of Avinashilingam University and Thiru. B. Santhosh Rao, Deputy Director General, Bureau of Indian Standards, Coimbatore and Thiru. C.M. Jayaram, Secretary, Citizens Voice Club, Coimbatore were the Chief guests of the day. (Plate II)

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, in her presidential address highlighted the ways and means of strengthening the



PLATE I
PUBLIC MEETING



PLATE II

CELEBRATION OF WORLD CONSUMER DAY

consumer movement in our country. She also mentioned the problem of food adulteration and the need for united Consumer Organisation in India.

Thiru B. Santhosh Rao, in his special address mentioned about how the consumers are sometimes subjected to exploitations and become victims of unethical unfair trade practices often unwillingly. Thiru C.M. Jayaram focussed attention on the need to create awareness among the public about the fundamental rights of wise consumer.

Two hundred university students, 40 teachers and 35 rural homemakers from Nanjundapuram village participated in the celebration. Besides the meeting, an exhibition was put up to create consumer awareness among the university students and also the villagers, by Miss. Kalpana and Miss. Vijayalakshmi, N. Research Scholars in Family Resource Management, ^{to} highlight the importance of buying standardised consumer products.

At the end of the meeting, in commemoration of the 80th Birthday of the Chancellor a pledge was undertaken by the University staff and students to participate actively in the consumer movement. The pledge conveys the message,

"We, the students of Avinashilingam University hereby pledge that we will involve actively in the Consumer Movement of our Country and always be wise consumers by ascertaining the rights of consumers. We will not be silent spectators of any unethical practices that will expose them".

2. Informal talk

A Consumer Awareness Campaign was organised on 17.2.99 wherein Dr. Rajalakshmi, Reader, Avinashilingam University gave an informal talk about consumerism. In her special address, she illustrated the problems faced by the rural consumers and explained as how to purchase commodities as an intelligent buyer. (Plate III). She also suggested certain guidelines to become proficient in wise purchase. The guidelines are :

- * Before going to the market, one should make a list of items based on needs and requirements.
- * The item to be purchased should be judged according to the desired quality in relation to its use.
- * Consumers should make their purchases according to the needs and duration of use.
- * Certain goods are subject to seasonal variations. They are cheap at a certain time and expensive at other times. So the commodities should be purchased at the right time.



PLATE III
INFORMAL TALK

- * One should make comparison of prices of the similar goods in the market and select the products at the right price assuring the quality is maintained and
- * Consumers should identify reliable vendors who would supply quality products at the right time within reasonable costs.

Around 35 rural women were benefited by this programme.

3. Exhibition

Exhibits are used to display to the public at a place called Exhibition where a large number of people gather (Rayudu, 1997).

In order to create awareness among the rural women about consumerism, an exhibition was arranged on 4.3.99 at Nanjundapuram village. The investigator exhibited consumer products such as medicines, cosmetics, groceries etc. (Plate IV). The advantages of seeing the manufacturing and expiry date while buying medicines and various methods of detecting the adulteration were also illustrated.

The investigator exhibited some charts and posters on wise consumer practices and also displayed essential consumer goods. Through these methods, the respondents were educated to buy only standardised products and also to buy the goods not more than maximum retail price rates (MRP).



PLATE IV
EXHIBITION IN THE VILLAGE



PLATE V
EXHIBITION INSIDE THE CAMPUS

It is interesting to note that a majority of the members (75 per cent) expressed that charts, posters and display of consumer goods and other visuals put up in the exhibitions were impressive and informative. The programme also gave them knowledge about buying only standardised goods and looking for proper labelling. Around 45 rural homemakers were benefited by this programme.

4. Video Programme

Video programme are more extensive than slide programmes. Video programmes are simpler to play.

A video programme was arranged with the help of Thiru. Santhosh Rao, Deputy Director, Bureau of Indian Standards, Coimbatore on 24.3.99 to highlight the advantages of buying standardised goods. The video lesson mainly focussed on the need for buying ISI mark goods. Dr. Rajalakshmi also stressed villagers to buy the standardised goods containing the ISI mark and other standards specifications like Agmark, FPO etc. (Plate VII). Around 25 rural women were benefited by this programme.

5. Street play

Street play is a kind of play without any formal stage arrangements as the very name indicates. It is usually performed in the streets. It is more creative and used to convey the message. No special costumes and makeup are needed (Varadharasan, 1972).



PLATE VI
VIDEO PROGRAMME



PLATE VII
STREET PLAY

In order to create awareness about the wrong weights and measurements, a street play was demonstrated by Dr. R. Rajalakshmi, Reader, Avinashilingam University, in Nanjundapuram village on 10.4.99. She gave ideas as how to create consumer awareness among the public. She also demonstrated about how we are cheated by the sellers through the use of wrong weights and measures while buying groceries, vegetables, fruits and other consumer items. In addition, she enacted through street play about the malpractices existing in the ration shop. She also motivated the respondents to come forward and take part in the street play. The malpractices occurring in the ration shop while buying rice, sugar and kerosene were also demonstrated. Miss. Agneta, Research Scholar of Sweden was the Chief Guest of the day. She appreciated the rural women for their interest towards consumerism. Around 25 rural homemakers were benefited by this programme.

C. EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMMES

Evaluation signifies our attempt to know how far a given project has achieved its desired objectives. It has been defined as "an activity involving a systematic process for forming objective judgements and drawing useful conclusions and action programmes. All evaluation activity

is, therefore, in the nature of a positive service and as such, should end with an indication of the ways and means of bringing about better results from the operation of programme" (Guruswamy and Jayaraman, 1989).

A checklist was administered to evaluate the outcomes of the action programmes conducted in Nanjundapuram village to assess the knowledge of the selected rural homemakers about consumerism. The checklist covered the following aspects:

1. Awareness about Consumer Problems
2. Awareness on Wise Purchase and
3. Awareness on Consumer Protection

1. Awareness about Consumer Problems:

Table XIV gives information about the awareness of the problems faced by the rural women before and after the action programmes.

TABLE XIV
AWARENESS ABOUT CONSUMER PROBLEMS

S.No	Problems	Before	After
i	Adulteration	100	100
ii	Hoarding	98	100
iii	Black-marketing	100	100
iv	Misleading advertisement	100	100
v	Rise in price	100	100
vi	Poor quality	100	100
vii	Wrong weights and measures	100	100

It is interesting to note that all the respondents realised the problems encountered while buying goods in the market even before the action programmes. But they were not aware of the measures to fight against these problems.

2. Awareness on Wise Purchase :

Table XV shows the knowledge of the homemakers on wise buying practices.

TABLE XV
AWARENESS ON WISE PURCHASE

S.No	Contents	Before	After
i	Buying standardised goods	75	100
ii	Reading the label	65	100
iii	Asking for guarantee and warrenty cards	100	100
iv	Checking the adulteration	50	100
v	Checking the weights and measures	60	100
vi	Checking the quality	75	100

From the above Table, it is very clear that most of the rural homemakers (75 per cent) were not aware of the benefits of buying standardised goods. They realised the need for it only after participating in the programme. Most of them were not aware of wise buying practices like reading the label, checking for quality, demanding guarantee and warrenty cards and checking weights while buying goods etc. The selected respondents gained more knowledge about consumerism through the various programmes such as exhibition, street play, public meeting, informal talk etc.

3. Awareness on Consumer Protection

Table XVI reflects their awareness towards Consumer Protection.

TABLE XVI
AWARENESS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

S.No	Contents	Before	After
i	Rights and Responsibilities	45	100
ii	Consumer Protection Laws and Acts	20	100
iii	Consumer Forum (Court)	50	100
iv	Method of filling case in the forum	25	100
v	Consumer Organisation	40	100

It is understood from Table XVI that most of the respondents were not aware of the various ways and means of protecting consumer interests and welfare. By attending the programmes they learnt about the functions of the consumer forum ^{and} also about the procedure to be followed for filling a case in the consumer court. They were also enlightened on their rights of being wise consumers and the need for enrolling in the voluntary consumer organisation.

Summary and Conclusion

V SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study on "Imparting Consumer Education to Rural Women" comprised of one hundred rural families residing at Nanjundapuram village in Coimbatore city. The main objective of the study was to impart consumer education to the selected rural women.

The findings of the study are summarised as below:

1. The information on the general family back ground shows that a majority of the selected families (96 per cent) were Hindus. A higher percentage (86 per cent) represented nuclear family and only 14 per cent of them were belonging to the large family.
2. Around 32 per cent of the heads and 23 per cent of the homemakers were in the age group of 40-50 years; 27 per cent of the heads and 15 per cent of the homemakers were above 50 years. Only five per cent of the heads and 13 per cent of the homemakers were illiterates.
3. The educational status of the families reveals that 44 per cent of the heads and 28 per cent of the homemakers respectively studied till high school and higher secondary level. Around 28 per cent of them were employed as labourers in textile mills. All the

selected rural women were engaged in homemaking activities.

4. Forty six per cent of the families belonged to low income group; 50 per cent of them were earning upto Rs.7,500/- per month. A higher percentage of the family's income (60 per cent) was spent on food. Around 5 per cent was spent for clothing, education and transport purposes.
5. Nearly fifty seven per cent of the homemakers came to know about the availability of consumer products through television. A greater percentage (63 per cent) were dissatisfied with the advertisement given through the mass media.
6. Guarantee and warranty cards were demanded by eighty three per cent of the homemakers; price was the prime factor for 67 per cent of the rural women while purchase. Fifty seven per cent of them were checking the manufacturing and expiry date while buying medicines.
7. Forty seven per cent of the rural homemakers expressed that they were cheated by false weights and measures, while buying fruits, vegetables and groceries.

8. Food items were purchased by the heads of the families, once in a month on ready cash. The clothing items were purchased in the textile shops and showrooms mainly by the heads of the families and homemakers.

9. In order to create awareness and impart consumer education among the selected respondents, the investigator organised a number of action programmes such as public meeting, informal talk, exhibition, video programme and street play in the selected rural area. A public meeting was held in Nanjundapuram village to convey the importance of wise purchasing habits. Around fifty rural homemakers and forty men were benefited by this programme. World Consumer Day was celebrated in Avinashilingam University Campus on 17th March, 1999 wherein two hundred university students, 40 teachers and 35 rural women from Nanjundapuram village participated and gained knowledge on consumer rights and protection. Through informal talk, 35 rural women came to know about the malpractices prevailing in the market and the guidelines for filling a complaint in the Consumer forum.

10. Exhibition created consumer awareness among 45 respondents. By viewing the video programme 25 per cent of the participants realised the need for buying standardised goods.
11. The malpractices occurring in the ration shops were demonstrated through street play and 25 per cent of the respondents were made aware of this fact.
12. It is interesting to note that all the respondents were known to the common malpractices prevailing in the market but they were not aware of the measures to fight against them. Most of the homemakers (75 per cent) were not realised the benefits of buying standardised goods.
13. Most of the rural homemakers were not aware of the consumer protection laws, acts and their rights and responsibilities of being wise consumers.

In conclusion the adage "we can only take the horse to the pond, but we cannot make it drink" is very apt and appropriate to the consumer movement. Voluntary consumer organisations can only educate the consumer about his rights and help him to enjoy the same but ultimately, it is left to the latter to avail the same or to continue to suffer injury, indignity and infringement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations emerged out of this study are:-

1. A great deal of responsibility for promoting quality as well as productivity consciousness rests squarely on the Government and Quasi-Government agencies or enterprises.
2. Consumer cooperatives, civil supply corporations and other agencies can play a useful role in quality control provided they take the job seriously and do not remain poor agencies for procurement and distribution of rationed articles as at present.
3. Consumerism must be taught through school lessons. The strategy therefore should be to give top priority to consumer education through schools, and the media, strengthen the existing voluntary organisations and provide adequate incentives for them to take up consumer causes.
4. Mass media like radio, and TV must devote more time for consumer issues. Newspapers and journals could spare more space for consumer problems. In the present day, the media has also an important role to play. The

present day media reach to the farthest corners of the country to awaken and arouse the people for building up a strong consumer movement. Television, radio, newspapers, public meetings can help to build up a strong consumer movement. Government must not only see that literature produced by the voluntary consumer organisations is given wide publicity, but also extend financial and infrastructural assistance to them to produce literature, films, video films etc.

5. Government institutions like prisons, hospitals, school/college hostels also must go in only for ISI, Agmark, FPO Certified products. This will create confidence in the minds of the public.
6. A great deal of responsibility rests on the government and its allied institutions to promote quality consciousness among the consumers and as such it must stand both as a model producer and consumer.
7. The consumers should not only be educated on the methods by which they are being exploited but also on the need to organise themselves into strong groups to resist such exploitation.
8. Testing laboratories should be set up for testing common consumer items or make use of the government and

other agencies for organising such testing work. They should educate the consumers to insist on packed, properly labelled and graded products and finally approach newspapers, radio, TV, etc, to devote some space/time for consumer education.

9. Consumerism is not anti-business and hence honest businessmen will do well to support the movement in their own larger interests and for common good.

To make the movement of consumerism more effective the following steps are useful:

- * Attending the breach of guarantees or warranties by forming Legal Action Committees.
- * Conducting short-term courses for the members about their rights and also appreciation of the products.
- * Consumers must be conscious of establishing their rights.
- * More and more consumer organisations have to be opened.
- * Consumerism may be taught even from elementary school level.
- * United and organised actions by the consumers are essential.
- * Introduction of more legislation in favour of consumers' welfare.
- * Consumer service (guidance) centres should be opened.
- * Government must take initiative to safeguard the interests of the public.
- * Black marketters, hoarders, profiteers must be convicted and their names must be published in newspapers; and the government should try offenders summarily.

The consumer movement should be strengthened in our country so that the tendency to push up the prices could be curbed and the quality of services and products ensured. Among consumers under Indian condition, the literacy level is low and purchasing power is poor. But one must be aware of one's rights and should not hesitate to exercise them in right direction. To face the businessmen, who are well organised, the consumers should also create strength by organising themselves into a strong body-cooperation. Consumer problems must be reduced by making them good buyers through education and implementing various Acts. The consumers themselves have to protect themselves through powerful consumer movement.

The rise of the consumer movement has been one of the most remarkable social developments in recent history. A strong consumer movement in India is the best to safeguard against the exploitation of consumers. The consumer can build to protect himself against multi-nations of the traders indulging in malpractices. To achieve the goal of economic freedom in India, a strong consumer movement is the need of the hour.

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Appendix

APPENDIX I

AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TO ELICIT INFORMATION ON THE PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR PATTERN OF RURAL FAMILIES

I. GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Name of the Interviewer :
2. Name of the Interviewee :
3. Address :

4. Religion : Hindu
Muslim
Christian
5. Type of the family : Nuclear
Joint
6. Size of the family : Small (1-3)
Medium (4-6)
Large (7 & above)
7. Socio Economic Background

S.No	Name	Relation to the head	Age	Sex	Educa- tion	Occupa- tion	Income
------	------	-------------------------	-----	-----	----------------	-----------------	--------

Other sources of income:

Business
Land
Rent
Investment
Others

Total family income = Rs. /- month.

II. Details on Family Expenditure

S.No	Items	Amount spent Rs.	Percentage
1.	Food		
2.	Clothing		
3.	Shelter		
4.	Education		
5.	Medicine		
6.	Fuel and light		
7.	Savings		
8.	Transport		
9.	Recreation		
10.	Others		

III. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR PATTERN

Sources of Information

1. How do you know about the availability of the commodities in the market ?

Radio TV Magazine Salesmanship
Friends Others

2. Are you satisfied with the advertisement given in the mass media ?

Yes No

If Yes, give the reasons: If No, give the reasons:

3. Mention the factors you look for while purchasing the goods ? (order of preference)

Quality Quantity Gifts and compliments
Price Brand Advertisements
Discount Labelling Any other

4. General factors considered during purchase of consumer goods:

S.No	Particulars	Yes	No
i.	Asking for guarentee		
ii.	Asking for warrenty cards		
iii.	Demanding for price list		
iv.	Comparing the price level		
v.	Reading the label		
vi.	Any other		

5. Specific factors considered while purchase

S.No	Items	Factors considered						
		Manufact- urer date	Expiry date	Weight	Price at MRP	ISI	Agmark	Any Other
i.	Grosseries							
ii.	Medicine							
iii.	Cosmetics							
iv.	Equipments							
v.	Beverages							
vi.	Chocolates							
vii.	Biscuits							
viii.	Canned foods							
ix.	Pickles							
x.	Jams and Jellys							
xi.	Any other							

6. Problems faced while purchase

S.No	Problems faced	Sugession offered
i.	Poor quality	
ii.	Wrong weights and measurement	
iii.	High price	
iv.	Adultration	
v.	Any other	

Items	Frequency			Place of purchase					Method		Persons involved					
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Cooperative Stores	Departmental	Super market	Street vendors	Ration shop	Cash	Credit	H.M.	H	S	D	S	O

Other vegetables

Brinjal
Beans
Ladies finger
Tomato

Nuts and Oils

Gingely oil
Groundnut oil
Vanaspathy
Any other

Fleshy foods

Mutton
Chicken
Fish
Egg

Beverages

Tea
Coffee
Any other

Sugars

Sugar
Jaggery

8. Details on frequency, method and persons involved in purchase of clothing

Items	Frequency			Persons involved					Place of purchase			Method			
	Yearly	Twice in a year	whenever needed	Home maker	Head	Son	Daughter	Servant	Others	Co-operative stores	Show rooms	Textile markets	Others	Cash	Credit
Saree															
Shirt															
Dhoti															
Salwar															
Half-saree															
Full skirt															
Kaili															
Pant															
Towel and kerchief															
Blouse															
Others															

7. Frequency and method of purchase of food items:

Items	Frequency			Place of purchase					Method		Persons involved					
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Cooperative Stores	Departmental	Super market	Street vendors	Ration shop	Cash	Credit	H.M.	H	S	D	S	O

Cereals

Raw rice
Boiled rice
Wheat
Maida
Ragi
Others

Pulses

Redgram dhal
Blackgram dhal
Bengalgram dhal
Greengram dhal
Any other

Roots and Tubers

Potato
Carrot
Yam
Any other

Green Leafy Vegetables

Cabbage
Amaranthus
Any other

9. Are you willing to attend a short programme to be a wise consumer buyer ?

Yes No

If Yes, give reasons

If No, give reasons

10. Mention the areas in which you want to seek more knowledge and information

S.No

Areas

- | S.No | Areas |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Adultration Techniques and Prevention |
| 2 | Consumer court |
| 3 | Standardisation (ISI) |
| 4 | Consumer Cooperatives |
| 5 | Qualities of a wise consumer |
| 6 | Consumer Rights and responsibilities |

11. Do you know there is consumer court, to complain and get solution

Yes

No

12. Give your suggestion to disseminate the knowledge on consumer education ?

APPENDIX II

CHECKLIST TO EVALUATE THE EXTENT OF KNOWLEDGE GAINED BY THE HOMEMAKERS ON CONSUMER EDUCATION

Kindly state your opinion "YES" or "NO" on the following aspects:

- | | Before | | After | |
|----|---|----|-------|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 1. | Do you face any of the problems while buying things ? | | | |
| | a. Adulteration | | | |
| | b. Hoarding | | | |
| | c. Black marketing | | | |
| | d. Misleading advertisements | | | |
| | e. Rise in price | | | |
| | f. Poor quality | | | |
| | g. Wrong weights and measures | | | |
| | h. Any other | | | |
| 2. | Do you think that advertisement is not useful and informative ? | | | |
| 3. | Are you aware of the advantages of buying standardised goods ? | | | |
| 4. | Do you read the label while buying things ? | | | |
| 5. | Do you check for quality and quantity while purchasing the products ? | | | |
| 6. | Do you know the advantages of buying goods on ready cash ? | | | |
| 7. | Do you face any problem in getting the item from the ration shop ? | | | |
| 8. | Do you check the weights while buying the ration items ? | | | |

Before After
Yes No Yes No

9. Are you aware how to detect adulteration ?
10. Do you see for manufacturing and expiry date while buying medicines and other food items ?
11. Do you demand for guarantee and warrenty cards ?
12. Do you think that consumer should be educated ?
13. Do you know your rights and responsibility as a wise consumer buyer ?
14. Are you aware of the existance of the Consumer Forum in Coimbatore to hear your complaints ?
15. Do you know how to file a case in the consumer forum ?
16. Are you aware of the acts that protects you from the businessman ?
17. Are you willing to join in a consumer organisation to protect yourself ?
18. Do you know the advantages of buying things in co-operative stores ?
19. Do you compare the prices with other shops ?
20. Do you demand for price list while purchase ?

நுகர்வோர் பொருட்காட்சி

பிற்பகல்

சோவை, மார்ச் 8

நுகர்வோரிடம் விழிப்புணர்வு ஏற்படுத்தும் பொருட்டு மூன்றாம் கட்டமாக நஞ்சுண்டாபுரத்தில் நுகர்வோர் பொருட்காட்சி நடத்தப்பட்டது.

இதில் மருந்துப் பொருட்கள், அன்றாடம் பயன்படுத்தும் உணவுப் பொருட்கள் மற்றும் அழகு சாதனப் பொருட்கள் ஆகியவை நுகர்வோர், பார்வைக்காக வைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தது. இப்பொருட்காட்சியில் நாம் அன்றாடம் பயன்படுத்தும் உணவுப் பொருட்களான அரிசி, பருப்பு, கடுகு வகைகள், ஊறுகாய் வகைகள் மற்றும் அணைத்து வகையான உணவுப் பொருட்களும் வைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தன. அப்பொருட்களில் செய்யப்பட்டிருக்கும் கலப்படமும் அதை கண்டுபிடிக்கும் செயல்முறை விளக்கமும் காட்டப்பட்டது. உதாரணமாக நாம் அரிசி வாங்கும் போது அதில் சலவைக் கற்கள் மற்றும் இதர கற்கள் கலந்திருக்க

8. 3. 99 திங்கட்கிழமை சோயமுத்தூர்

வாய்ப்பு இருக்கும். அதை கண்டுபிடிக்கும் எளிய வழியும் சொல்லப்பட்டது. அதாவது உள்ளங்கையில் சிறிது அரிசியை வைத்து சையை சிறிது சிறிதாக நீரில் அமிழ்த்தினால் கற்கள் நீரில் மூழ்கி விடும். இது போல கடுகு விதைகள், காப்பித்தூள், மிளகு போன்ற பொருட்களில் உள்ள கலப்படத்தை கண்டுபிடிக்கும் செயல்முறை விளக்கம் காண்பிக்கப்பட்டது.

பின்னர் மருத்துவப் பொருட்கள் வாங்கும் போது அதன் தயாரித்த தேதி மற்றும் முடிவு தேதி ஆகியவற்றைப் பார்த்து வாங்குவது பற்றி செல்வி எம். கல்பனாவால் எடுத்துக் கூறப்பட்டது.

பிறகு அழகு சாதனப் பொருட்கள் வாங்கும் போது, அதன் அளவு, விலை, மற்றும் தயாரிக்கப்பட்ட தேதி ஆகியவற்றை பார்த்து வாங்குவது குறித்தும் எடுத்துக் கூறப்பட்டது.

இப்பொருட்காட்சியில் டாக்டர் ஆர். ராஜலட்சுமி, பேராசிரியர், அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக்கழகம் அவர்கள் கலந்து கொண்டு தரமான பொருட்களை கண்டறிய உதவும் முத்திரைகளான ஐஎஸ்ஐ, அக்மார்க், எஃப். பி. ஓ. ஆகியவற்றின் முக்கியத்துவம் பற்றி எடுத்துக் கூறினார்.

இப்பொருட்காட்சியில் அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக்கழக, மனை நிர்வாகத்துறை முதுகலை மாணவிகள் பங்கேற்றனர். இப்பொருட்காட்சியை சுமார் 40 குடும்பத் தலைவிகள் கண்டு பயன் பெற்றனர்.

இப்பொருட்காட்சிக்கு பல்கலைக்கழக வேந்தர் டாக்டர் ராஜம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ், துணைவேந்தர் டாக்டர் லக்ஷ்மி சாந்தா ராஜசோபால், பதிவாளர் டாக்டர் சரோஜா பிரபாகரன், மனையியல் துறைத்தலைவர் டாக்டர் சீதாலக்ஷ்மி மற்றும் நாட்டு நலப் பணித்திட்ட ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர் டாக்டர் சாரம்மா ராய்ஸ் மற்றும் டாக்டர் கமலா ரங்கநாதன், மற்றும் துறைத்தலைவர் டாக்டர் சத்தியவதி முத்து ஆகியோர் உறுதுணையாக இருந்தனர்.

உணவுப் பொருட்களில் கலப்பாத்தை கண்டுபிடிக்க பொருட்காட்சி

DINATHANTH 11-3-99

கோவையில் நடந்தது

கோவை, மார்ச்.11—

உணவுப்பொருட்களில் கலப் படத்தை கண்டுபிடிப்பது பற்றி கோவையில் நுகர்வோர் பொருட்காட்சி நடந்தது.

நுகர்வோர் பொருட்காட்சி

நுகர்வோரிடம் விழிப்புணர்வு ஏற்படுத்தும் பொருட்டு, நடுகண்டாபுரத்தில் நுகர்வோர் பொருட்காட்சி நடத்தப்பட்டது.

மருந்துப்பொருட்கள், அன்றாடம் பயன்படுத்தும் உணவுப் பொருட்கள் மற்றும் அழகு சாதனப் பொருட்கள் ஆகியவை நுகர்வோர், பார்வைக்காக வைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தது. இப்பொருட்காட்சியில் அன்றாடம் பயன்படுத்தும் அரிசி, பருப்பு, கடுகு வகைகள், ஊறுகாய் வகைகள் மற்றும் அனைத்து வகையான உணவுப் பொருட்களும் வைக்கப்பட்டிருந்தன. அப்பொருட்களில்

செய்யப்பட்டிருக்கும் கலப்படமும், அதை கண்டுபிடிக்கும் செயல்முறை விளக்கமும் காட்டப்பட்டது. உதாரணமாக நாம் அரிசி வாங்கும் போது அதில் சலவைக் கற்கள் மற்றும் இரை கற்கள் கலந்திருக்கவாய்ப்பு இருக்கும். அதை கண்டுபிடிக்கும் எளிய வழியும் சொல்லப்பட்டது. அநாவாயு உள்ளங்கையில் சிறிது அரிசியை வைத்து கையை சிறிது சிந்தாக நீரில் அமிழ்த்தினால் கற்கள் நீரில் மூழ்கி விடும் இதுபோல் கடுகு விதைகள், காப்பித்தூள், மிளகு போன்ற பொருட்களில் உள்ள கலப்படத்தைக் கண்டுபிடிக்கும் செயல்முறை விளக்கம் காண்பிக்கப்பட்டது.

மருந்து-அழகு சாதனங்கள்

மருந்துப்பொருட்கள் வாங்கும் போது அதன் தயாரித்த தேதி மற்றும் முடிவு தேதி ஆகியவற்றைப் பார்த்து வாங்குவது பற்றி எம்.கல்பனர் விளக்கினார். அழகு சாதனப்பொருட்கள்

வாங்கும் போது, அதன் அளவு, விலை, மற்றும் தயாரிக்கப்பட்ட தேதி ஆகியவற்றைப் பார்த்து வாங்குவது குறித்தும் விளக்கி கூறப்பட்டது.

இப்பொருட்காட்சியில் டாக்டர் ஐ.ராஜலட்சுமி (பேராசிரியர், அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக்கழகம்) கலந்து கொண்டு தரமான பொருட்களை கண்டறிய உதவும் ஐ.எஸ்.ஐ. அக்மார்க், எப் பி ஓ ஆகியவற்றின் முக்கியத்துவம் பற்றி எடுத்துக் கூறினார். இப்பொருட்காட்சியில் அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக்கழகம், மனை நிர்வாகத்துறை முதுகலை மாணவிகள் பங்கேற்றனர். இப்பொருட்காட்சியை காண்குடும்பத் தலைவிகளும் வந்திருந்தனர்.

இப்பொருட்காட்சி ஏற்பாடுகளை அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக்கழக வேந்தர் டாக்டர் ராஜம்மாள் பா.தேவதாஸ், துணை வேந்தர், டாக்டர் லக்ஷ்மி சாந்தாராஜகோபால், பதிவாளர் டாக்டர் சரோஜா பிரபாகர்ன், மனையியல் துறைத் தலைவர் டாக்டர் சீதா லக்ஷ்மி, நாட்டுநலப் பணித்திட்ட ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர் டாக்டர் சாரம்மாராய்ஸ், டாக்டர் கமலா ரங்கநாதன், மற்றும் துறைத்தலைவர் டாக்டர் சத்தியவதி முத்து ஆகியோர் செய்து இருந்தனர்.

கோவையில் நுகர்வோர் விழிப்புணர்வு பொதுக்கூட்டம்

கோவை, பிப். 17.

கோவையில் நுகர்வோர் விழிப்புணர்வு பொதுக்கூட்டம் நடைபெற்றது.

அதன் விவரம் வருமாறு:

கோவை நஞ்சுண்டாபுரத்தில் சுயசார்புக்குழு மற்றும் நுகர்வோர் விழிப்புணர்வு பொதுக்கூட்டம் நடைபெற்றது. கூட்டத்தில் டாக்டர் வி.கே. செல்வராஜ், தமிழக பொதுத் தொழிலாளர் நல்வாழ்வுக் கூட்டமைப்பு, டாக்டர் ஆர். ராஜலட்சுமி, பேராசிரியர் அவினாசிவிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழகம், மற்றும் சுந்தரராஜ், தலைவர் லயன்ஸ் கிளப் ஆப் கோல்டன் சிட்டி ஆகியோரின் முன்னிலையில் நடைபெற்றது.

இந்திரா மகளிர் சங்கத் தலைவி சாரதாமணி மற்றும் விசாலாட்சி ஆகியோர் கலந்து கொண்டனர்.

விழாவில் டாக்டர் வி.கே.

செல்வராஜ் பெண்கள் முன்னேற்றத்தைப் பற்றியும், அரசு அவர்களுக்கு வழங்கும் சலுகைகள் பற்றியும் எடுத்துக் கூறினார். அடுத்ததாக பொம்மி சுபசார்புக்குழு தலைவி, சண்முக கவுண்டர் நகர், சுயசார்புக் குழுக்களின் வெற்றிக்கான வழிகளை வந்திருந்த மகளிருக்கு எடுத்துக் கூறினார்.

செயல்பாடுகள்

பிறகு சுயசார்புக் குழுவின் விதிமுறைகள், அதன் செயல்பாடுகள் குறித்து செல்வி செல்வ

நாயகி, திட்ட அலுவலர், அவினாசிவிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழகம், அவர்கள் கூறினார். மேலும் பெண்களுக்கு அரசால் வழங்கப்படும் கடன் உதவிப் பற்றியும் தெள்ளத் தெளிவாக விளக்கினார்.

பின்னர் நுகர்வோர் விழிப்புணர்வு முகாமின் இரண்டாவது கட்டமாக டாக்டர் ஆர். ராஜலட்சுமி இந்தியாவில் நுகர்வோரின் நிலைப் பற்றி பேசினார். மேலும் நுகர்வோராகிய நாம் சமுதாயத்தில் எவ்வாறு ஏமாற்றப்படுகிறோம் என்றும், தரமான பொருட்களைப் பார்த்து வாங்கும் முறைகள் பற்றிய பல சுருத்துக்களை எடுத்துக் கூறினார்.

ராஜம்மாள் தேவதாஸ்

அவினாசிவிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழக முதல் மற்றும் இரண்டாம் ஆண்டு முதுகலை மாணவிகள் சோயாவில் பலகாரம் தயாரிக்கும் செயல்முறை விளக்கத்தை செய்து காட்டினார்.

இவ்விழாவிற்கு செல்வி சங்கீதா வரவேற்புரை கூற, செல்வி செல்வநாயகி நன்றியுரை கூறினார். இந்த முகாமிற்கு பல்கலைக்கழக வேந்தர் டாக்டர் ராஜம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ், துணைவேந்தர் டாக்டர் லட்சுமி சாந்தா ராஜசோபால், பதிவாளர் டாக்டர் சீரோஜா பிரபாகரன், மனையியல் துறைத் தலைவர் டாக்டர் சீதாலட்சுமி, மற்றும் நாட்டு நலப்பணித்திட்ட ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர் டாக்டர் சாரம்மா ராய்ஸ் மற்றும் துறைத்தலைவர் டாக்டர் சத்தியவதி முத்து ஆகியோர் உறுதுணையாக இருந்தனர்.



C.M. Jeyaraman, Secretary, Citizens Voice Club, Coimbatore addressed the gathering on the world consumer day held at Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore. Chancellor Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas presided over the function. B. Santhosh Rao, Dy. Director General, Bureau of Indian standards, Coimbatore gave the felicitation address in the meeting.

World Consumer Day

Coimbatore, April 1
In Commemoration of 80th Birth Day of the Chancellor, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, World Consumer Day was celebrated at

Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore organised by the Department of Family Resource Management and N.S.S. Unit. Dr. R. Rajalakshmi, Reader in Family Resource Management welcomed the gathering. Mrs. Thanuja, Research Scholar, spoke on the significance of the World Consumer day. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, Chancellor of the University, presided over the function and Thiru B. Santhosh Rao, Deputy Director General, Bureau of Indian standards, Coimbatore was Chief guest the day.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, in her presidential address highlighted the ways and means of strengthening the Consumer Movement in our Country. She expressed that we should create awareness among the public about the right and responsibilities of wise consumers. She also mentioned the problem of food adulteration and the need for united consumer organisation in India.

Thiru B. Santhosh Rao, Deputy Director General, Bureau of Indian Standards, Coimbatore, greeted the audience and thanked the University authorities for celebrating consumer day. In his special address he mentioned about how the consumers are sometimes, subjected to exploitations and become victims of unethical unfair trade practices often unwillingly. In order to fight for our rights, we have to

build a strong consumer movement.

Thiru C.M. Jayaram, an active consumerist and secretary of citizen's Voice Club, Coimbatore, greeted the gathering and focussed attention on the need to create awareness among the public about the fundamental rights of wise consumers. He also explained in detail about the services of his organisation in the cause of consumer protection in Coimbatore.

Besides the meeting, an exhibition was put up to create consumer awareness among the University students by Miss. Kalpana and Miss. Vijaya lakshmi, N. Research Scholars in Family Resource Management highlighting the importance of buying standardised consumer products.

At the end of the meeting, in commemoration of the 80th birthday of the Chancellor, a pledge was undertaken by the University staff and students to participate actively in the Consumer Movement.

Dr. Sathyavathi Muthu, Head of the Family Resource Management proposed the vote of thanks.