

# Consumer Dialogue

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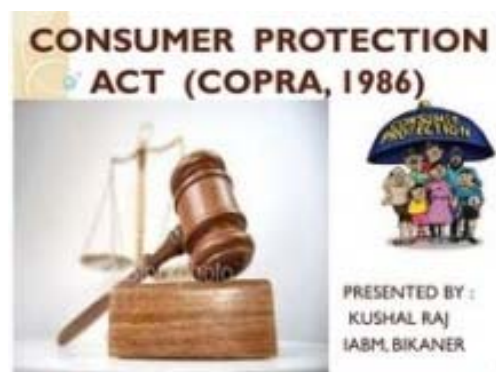
Bi-monthly GRANIRCA E-newsletter

## In Rajasthan Only 11 Percent Consumers have heard about COPRA 1986

Rajasthan is still lagging behind in generating awareness on consumer rights. Only 16 percent respondents are aware of consumer rights in Rajasthan as compared to India (42 percent). Only 20 and 11 percent respondents have heard about Consumer Protection Act (COPRA), 1986 at the national level and in Rajasthan, respectively. These results have been revealed by a national level survey organised by CUTS International under its project ConsumerUp being implemented with the support of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India.

The Rajasthan part of the survey featured a sample size of a total of 687, consisting of 171 (urban), 516 (rural), below poverty line (161), above party line (526), males (357) and females (330). The districts targeted were Jaipur, Alwar, Jaisalmer and Hanumangarh. The other Rajasthan-centric key findings from the survey are:

- Close to 74 percent of respondents meet their drinking water demand through public water supply. About 53 and 13 percent of respondents are using private and community toilets, respectively. About 35 percent of consumers receive more than 20 hours of electricity supply on a normal day and only nine percent are aware about electricity regulator. 21 percent of respondents use LPG and 73 percent use wood as fuel for cooking. 54 percent of respondents send their children to study in government schools and almost 91 percent respondents believe that access to education has increased due to Right to Education (RTE). Close to 56 percent respondents have rated healthcare facility as "fair". According to 32 percent respondents, generic medicines are not available easily. Only 21 percent respondents are fully satisfied with government's effort to ensure adequacy, accessibility and affordability of basic needs.
- ISI is the most known certification is referred to by 24 percent respondents, followed by AGMARK (one percent) while making a purchase.
- About 39 percent respondents always check weight/quantity of product before purchasing, 18 percent respondents always check the price of the product before making a purchase. Only 11 percent respondents are aware of COPRA, 1986. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is the most commonly recognised regulator by 31 percent respondents, followed by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (16 percent).
- Only 29 percent respondents are satisfied with the present grievance redressal mechanism. Only 09 percent believe that the present grievance redressal mechanism is empowered to compensate aggrieved consumer.
- Only 16 percent respondents have heard about consumer rights, 60 percent are aware of *Jago Grahak Jago*. 49 percent of respondents reported TV as most effective means of communication for consumer education, followed by seminars (35 percent).
- Only 13 percent are aware of the process of public consultation or consumer representation in government platforms and just one percent participated in such consultation. Lack of awareness among people (90 percent) is the most important reason, followed by lack of interest among people (nine percent) for not participating in such event.
- Only four percent respondents are aware of environmental-friendly certifications and initiatives.



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## District-level Training Workshops

District-level Training Workshops (DLTWs) were targeted to empower consumers at grassroots and ensure effective and strong consumer movement in 12 project districts which would influence the entire state of Rajasthan. DLTWs were intended to fill the need of a strong consumer movement at grassroots by furnishing proper information, methodology, procedures and an approachable redressal mechanism to the people.

During the period, 12 DLTWs were organised, the details of which are:

- Dholpur, July 06-07, 2012, 46 participants. Resource Persons – R G Parihar, Vice Principal, *Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya*, Dholpur; Harbhan Singh Sikarwar, Time Keeper, Rajasthan Roadways; B L Nainawat DSO, Dholpur; V P Singh, Sales Officer, Indian Oil Corporation Limited; H P Yogi, Advocate, Sawai Madhopur; and Rakesh Parmar, *Samajik Vikas Samiti*.
- Kota, July 12-13, 2012, 55 participants. Resource Persons – Chandra Deep Singh, Lecturer, Kota Rajkiya Vidhi Mahavidyalaya; Abdul Aziz, Chairman, District Waqf Committee; Akhtar Khan Akela, Advocate; H P Yogi, Advocate, Sawai Madhopur; Hari Mohan Sharma, Legal Metrology Department; and Himmata Bai, *Sarpanch Bahu, Gram Panchayat*, Kasar.
- Dausa, July 12-13, 2012, 68 participants. Resource Persons – Premchand Jain, Member, Alternative Disputes Redressal; Sunil Mishra, Member Advocate, *Lok Adalat*; Murli Manohar Sharma, President, District Bar Association; Shyam Sunder Sharma, District Supply Officer, Dausa; Chagan Beniwal, ACM, Dausa; Seema Bhardwaj, Ex-Member, *Lok Adalat* and N C Jain, Senior Branch Manager, Bank of Baroda.
- Alwar, July 19-20, 2012, 36 participants. Resource Persons – Hari Shankar Goyal, Advocate, Consumer Forum; Rashmi, Lecturer, Raj Rishi College Alwar; Shashi Tiwari, Ex-Member, Consumer Forum; Ramdayal Meena, District Supply Officer, Alwar; Sanjay Pradhan, Officer, Legal Metrology Department; and H P

Yogi, Advocate, Sawai Madhopur.

- Tonk, July 24-25, 2012, 52 participants. Resource Persons – Abdul Aziz, Member, District Consumer Forum; and H P Yogi, Advocate, Sawai Madhopur.
- Chittorgarh, July 26-27, 2012, 43 participants. Resource Persons – Girish Kumar Pandey, President, District Consumer Forum; Gangadhar Solanki, Consumer Activist; Kishan Lal Jeengar, *Sarpanch, Boheda Gram Panchayat*; and Rajneesh Pitalia, Advocate.
- Jodhpur: August 06-07, 2012, 62 participants. Resource Persons – S R Dewasi, Inspector, Legal Metrology Department; Mahendra Asopa; Resham Bala, Member District Consumer Forum; Sumit Purohit, District Supply Office; and Manoj Kulshreshtha and Bajrang Dhayal, Chief Medical Health Office, Jodhpur.
- Churu, August 08-09, 2012, 36 participants. Resource Persons – Sunil Jandu, Chief Medical Health Officer, Churu; Ziyarat Ali Khan, Consumer Activist; and H P Yogi, Advocate, Sawai Madhopur.
- Jalore, August 17-18, 2012, 66 participants. Resource Persons – Sohan Ram Meghwanshi, President, District Consumer Forum, Jalore; Ishwar Mehta, Vice Chairman, Jalore Municipality; and Madan Bohra, Social Worker.
- Sikar, August 23-24, 2012, 41 participants. Resource Persons – Shankar Sewda, Mukesh Pareek, Bajrang Lal Sharma and Md. Abid, all lawyers, and R K Bagaria, Legal Metrology Department.
- Bundi, August 31-September 01, 2012, 62 participants. Resource Persons – Bhavna Raghav Gujar, DSO Bundi; Mukesh Dadheech, Member District Consumer Forum; Giriraj Sharma, Food Safety Officer; Raj Kumar Dadheech, Advocate; and H P Yogi, Advocate, Sawai Madhopur.
- Banswara, September 03-04, 2012, 62 participants. Resource Persons – P S Ameta, General Manager, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd.

## Other Activities in GRANIRCA

- The first briefing paper on **'Insurance Services-Challenges and Opportunities before Consumers'** has been printed. **Consumer in Action** (April-June 2012) and **Consumer Dialogue** (May-June 2012) have been printed and disseminated.
- The **Annual Report 2011** has been printed in bi-lingual.

Consumer Protection Team staff attended Open Houses organised by Idea-Cellular; Reliance; BSNL; Vodafone; Airtel; and Aircell at various places of Rajasthan. At a few places, CUTS networkers were also asked to attend these workshops like in Ajmer and Udaipur.



## Consumers Hold Key to Curb Fake Products

A jeweller who allegedly sold fake gems worth Rs 23 crore to HCL chairman's wife hogged the headlines in 2011, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. The unfettered growth of counterfeit and smuggled goods estimated at US\$600-US\$650bn globally is likely to be more than double by 2015.

Taking the help of consumer forums is an option, but asking for bills against purchase and not falling for cheaper copycat variants need to be the first steps. Giving an example of the extent of the malaise, P C Jha, ex-chairman, Central Board of Excise & Customs, said there are 60 companies with Nike names, 400 entities with Reliance brand, 217 having Intel and 65 going by Rolex name. With a minor change to the name, which is not easily recognisable, the products are passed off as genuine with a lower price range which not only cause huge tax losses to exchequer but some time cause irreparable damage, as in

the case of counterfeit medicines. While fake medicines, which account for up to 20 percent can have a fatal impact, spurious goods are rampant in sectors like autoparts, fast moving consumer goods and IT. Gems and jewellery used to be a lucrative segment for smugglers when restrictions on imports were there.



There are always a few black sheep who tarnish the image of the industry. But, buyers can always go for hallmarked products or certificates in case

of diamonds. In Jaipur, the problem is more from the tourist guides who take visitors to an outlet and ask for a 30-40-percent commission from the shop owner.

According to a Euro monitor report, illicit trade in tobacco products accounts for 16 percent of the industry, having grown by 58 percent between 2004 and 2009. This has made India the world's sixth-largest market for illicit cigarettes. A study says the fake auto-parts market in the country is estimated to be around Rs 2,500 crore, which is approximately 35 percent of the total auto parts sold.

*(Times News Network, 17.08.12)*

## Panel Formed to Regulate Functioning of Direct Selling Sector

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has constituted an inter-ministerial committee to regulate the functioning of and suggest legal action against companies engaged in direct selling/network/multi-level marketing. The panel, to be headed by Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, will have representatives from the Department of Finance Services, the Department of Revenue, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the RBI as its members.



*(Press Trust of India, 25.07.12)*



## Customer Servicing Standards Coming

Still fuming about the quality of service that a company provided you? Your wait may be over soon. The maxim, 'customer is king', could reign supreme in its true spirit, when companies will have to adhere to a global customer service excellence quality standard.

To be launched later this month for the first time in the country, 'The International Standard for Service Excellence' (TISSE 2012) will be available for goods and service providers to benchmark their entire organisation, including product groups, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, packaging, quality control, customer help lines and customer service departments, to global standards.

TISSE is recognised as the global quality mark in West Asia and, more recently, has begun to be adopted in Asia, America, Australia and Europe. It is developed and governed by The International Customer Service Institute, UK (TICSI).



Gurgaon-based management consulting firm Hexagon Analysts and Consulting Services Pvt Ltd is the exclusive implementation partner of TICSI, UK, for India, while their Certification Partner for the final audit leg is the British Standards Institution (BSI, India). The third party certification from BSI ensures that there is no conflict of interest and enhances the credibility of the standard and its implementation, Hexagon Analysts and Consulting claimed.

"Hexagon will, first of all, enable Indian organisations to benchmark their existing customer service practices and service delivery levels to global standards and then assist them in meeting TISSE by providing appropriate consultancy, training and support." Companies will have to adhere to 600-700 points on which they would be rated. These standards will be applicable to business-to-business (B2B) and business-to consumers as well."

An organisation can be certified at three levels, based on its customer focus – five stars (if it achieves more than 90 percent on TISSE 2012), four stars (if it achieves more than 75 percent) and three stars (if it achieves more than 55 percent). The Standard must be seen as an investment, which will lead to an increase in brand loyalty, which will ultimately lead to better customer acquisition and retention and, in the long term, sustained or improved profits.

TISSE ensures that organisations will be in a better position to provide a higher level of customer service along with effective feedback management to monitor all of the communication channels, including the social media which are under the organisation's control.

### Upcoming GRANIRCA Activities

1. Finalising and Printing of Research of 2012 "Plight of Electricity Consumers in Rajasthan";
2. State Level Media Workshop on October 30, 2012 at Jaipur;
3. Publishing of Second Briefing Paper; and
4. District Level Training Workshops-Synthesis Report.



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