
CHAPTER III CONSUMER PROTECTION IN INDIA AND ABROAD

Origin of Consumerism

World Consumer Movement

International Organisation of Consumer Unions

Growth of Consumer Protection Groups

Some notable Consumer Associations

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CONSUMER PROTECTION IN INDIA & ABROAD

Consumerism began with Persian Emperor 'Cyrus' the great who in 500 B.C. complained about the malpractices in Greek Market.

The Consumer Movement as is viewed today originated in United States of America and it gradually spread to other countries of the world. It became a world wide phenomenon as is evident from the following table :

TABLE NO 1

CONSUMER MOVEMENT IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD :

ORIGINATED	COUNTRY
1900 - 09	United State of America
1910 - 19	Britain
1920 - 29	Netherlands [1926]
1930 - 39	Norway [1939]
1940 - 49	Ireland [1942], Denmark [1947], F.R. of Germany [1948], Switzerland [1948], Japan [1948]
1950 - 59	Kenya [1951], France [1952], Hungary [1953], Iceland [1953], Israel [1955], Italy [1955], Canada [1956], Belgium [1957], Sri Lanka [1958], Australia [1959], New Zeland [1959]
1960 - 69	Austria [1961], South Africa [1961], Luxemburg [1962], Philipines [1962], Korea [1963], Yugoslavia [1963], Trinland, W.I. [1964], Nigeria [1965], Malaysia [1965], India [1966] , Jamacia [1966], Mauritius [1967], Pakistan [1968], Venezuela [1968], Taiwan [1969], Spain [1969].

1970 - 79 St. Lucia [1970], Barbados [1970] Guyana, Singapore, Turkey, Fiji [all in 1971], Guam, Mexico, Greece, Montserrat [all in 1972], Indonesia, Thailand, Sweden [all in 1973], Iran, Portugal, Hongkong, Egypt [all in 1974], Bangladesh [1978].

[Source : Consumer Directory, International Organisation of Consumer Unions, Hague, Netherlands].¹

There is now hardly a developing country left, which has not awakened and responded to this new social movement.

The emergence of RALPH NADER on the American horizon gave momentum to the consumer movement. His name symbolised and heralded a substantial broadening of the scope of the concept. He is one of the rare idealists whose crusade spread all over in arousing consumer consciousness.

The International Organisation of Consumer Unions was set up in 1960 in Hague, Netherlands. IOCU promotes International Co-operation, provides sources of information, represents the interests of consumers at the international levels, constitutes international forum for consumer problems and encourages the formation of new consumer organisations.

Growth of Consumer Movement in India :

The Consumer Movement is gaining momentum in India and consumer groups are doing well espousing a number of causes.

While there was only one group in 1950, today there are over 190 Consumer Protection Groups throughout the country. The following table gives the distribution of consumer forums according to the year of establishment.

TABLE NO 3

DISTRIBUTION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION GROUPS ACCORDING
TO THE YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT ² :

Sl. No.	Category	No. of groups	Percentage
01	Before - 1950	1	3
02	1950 - 1960	-	-
03	1960 - 1970	3	8
04	1970 - 1975	8	22
05	1975 - 1980	9	24
06	1980 - 1985	15	40
07	1986	1	3
Total		<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> 37 =====	<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> 100 =====

[Source : Study conducted by CERC Ahmedabad].

The largest number of groups, namely 45 are situated inGujrat, followedby Karnataka [26], Andhra Pradesh [23], Tamil Nadu [19], and Maharashtra [13], Uttar Pradesh the largest state of the country has only three consumer agencies.

The following table shows the consumer groups according to the size of the City/Town.

TABLE NO 3

DISTRIBUTION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION GROUPS ACCORDING TO THE SIZE OF CITY/TOWN.³

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Groups	Percentage
01	<u>Metropolitan Cities</u>		
	Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras	11	30
02	<u>Larger Cities</u>		
	Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune	8	21
03	<u>Smaller Cities</u>		
	Baroda, Hubli, Vishakapatanam, Vijayawada, Mangalore, Surat, Rajkot.	7	19
04	<u>Towns</u>		
	Himmatnagar, Udupi, Sullia, Kodinar, Mahuda, Dandeli, Basrur, Karkal, Vizianagaram, Nadiadad, Warangal	11	30
	Total	37	100

A majority of the organisations are based in cities, Delhi having the largest [14] followed by Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bombay and Bangalore[5].

A dishearting feature, however, is that rural India which accounts for nearly 70 percent of the population does not have required number of consumer protection groups.

Some notable consumer protection groups :

1. Consumer Guidance Society of India Bombay.
2. Voluntary Organisation in Interest of Consumer Education [VOICE] New Delhi.
3. Indian Federation of Consumers Organisation, New Delhi.
4. Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad.
5. Consumer Council of India, Madras.
6. Consumer Protection & Research Foundation, Hubli.
7. Consumer Forum, Udupi.
8. Consumers Education Trust, Mangalore.
9. Grahak Jagruti, Bangalore.
10. Karnataka Forum for Promotion of Consumers Action, Bangalore.
11. Akhil Bharatiya Grahak Panchayat, Pune.
[founded by Bindu Madhav Joshi]

To promote fair trade practices in industry and trade in the interest of consumers "Fair Trade Practices Association" [FTPA] was set up in 1966.

According to T. Thomas, the role of Consumer Organisation in India is three fold : Consumer Education, Product Rating and Liasion with Government and Producers. But the day of consumer awakening is yet to down in India.

REFERENCES :

1. Dr. Choudhary, "World Consumer Movement", Indian Journal of Marketing, Dec. 1983. P.3
2. Sylvester Lobo, "The Consumer Game", 2001, ^{Science Today} Jan 1989 P.50
3. Ibid.