

Consumer Protection

⇒ Consumer Protection ÷ Refers to the act of providing adequate protection to consumers against the unscrupulous, exploitative and unfair Trade practice of manufacturers and service providers.

⇒ Need of consumer Protection ÷ In the view of widespread exploitation of consumers, There is an urgent need to protect consumers.

⇒ Importance of consumer protection ÷ consumer protection is important for both consumers and businessmen.

⇒ From consumers' point of view ÷

1) consumer Ignorance.

2) unorganised consumers.

3) Widespread Exploitation of consumers.

⇒ From Businessman's point of view ÷

1) Long-term Interest of Business.

2) Business uses Society's Resources.

3) Social Responsibility.

4) Moral Justification.

➤ Government Intervention

⇒ Consumer Protection Act 1986 :- It was enacted to protect and promote the Interest of consumers. It applies to all undertakings. Its main features are:

➤ It has granted certain Rights to consumers.

➤ It also provides Safeguards to consumers against any type of exploitation.

➤ It has provided three-tier redressal machinery to provide remedy to consumers.

⇒ Consumer Rights :- The consumer protection Act, 1986 has provided following six rights to consumers:

1) Right to Safety :- Right to be protected against goods and services which are hazardous to life, health and property.

2) Right to be informed :- Right to have complete information about the product to protect himself from unfair trade practice.

3) Right to choose :- Right to choose from a variety of goods and services at competitive prices.

4) Right to be Heard :- Right to file a complaint and to be Heard in case of dissatisfaction with a good or a service.

5) Right to Seek Redressal :- Right to get relief or compensation against any exploitation.

6) Right to Consumer Education :- Right to acquire knowledge and skills to be an informed consumer.

⇒ Consumer Responsibilities :- consumers should fulfill following responsibilities to enforce their rights:

- consumer should have knowledge about market.
- consumer must be quality conscious.
- uses the products safely.
- consumer must refer label carefully.
- Insist on cash memo.
- consumer must be honest.
- consumer must file a complaint.
- Form consumer organisations.
- consumer must respect the environment.
- Assert yourself to ensure that you get a fair deal.
- Be a rational consumer.

⇒ complaint can be filed by:

- Any consumer;

- ii) Any registered consumer's Association;
- iii) The central government or any State Government;
- iv) one or more consumers on behalf of numerous consumers;
- v) A legal heir or representative of a deceased consumer.

⇒ complaint can be made against:

- i) Unfair and Restrictive Trade practices.
- ii) Defective Goods.
- iii) Deficient Services.
- iv) Excess-Price.
- v) Hazardous Goods.
- vi) Hazardous Services.

⇒ Three-Tier Redressal Agencies: The consumer protection Act 1986 has set up three-tier machinery for the redressal of consumer grievances.

1. District Forum: complaint is filed when claim does not exceed ₹ 20 lakhs.

2. State Commission: complaint is filed when claim exceeds ₹ 20 lakhs but does not exceed ₹ 1 crore.

3. National Commission: complaint is filed when claim exceeds ₹ 1 crore.

4) Consumer Awareness - Role of consumer organisations and NGOs:

In India a number of consumer organisations and NGOs help to protect and promote consumer's interest. They educate consumers about their rights and publishing various periodicals to impart knowledge about consumer problems.

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