

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

Consumer protection is the act of providing proper protection to customers against unethical, exploitative, and unfair trading practices by manufacturers and service providers.

**CONSUMER PROTECTION:** Given the widespread abuse of customers, there is an urgent need to safeguard them.

### IMPORTANT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

#### **From the consumers' point of view**

1. Consumer Ignorance.
2. Unorganized Consumers
3. Widespread Consumer Exploitation

#### **From the Businessman's Point of View**

1. Business has long-term interests.
2. Business utilizes societal resources.
3. Social responsibility.
4. Moral justification.
5. Government Intervention.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1986:

It was enacted to safeguard and advance the interests of consumers. It applies to all enterprises. Its primary features are:

1. Consumers have been granted certain rights.
2. It also protects customers from any form of exploitation.
3. It has established a three-tier redressal mechanism to assist consumers.

### CONSUMER'S RIGHTS:

1. **Right to Safety:** Protection from harmful products and services for life, health, and property.
2. **Right to be Informed:** The right to receive comprehensive information about the product in order to defend himself from unfair commercial practices.
3. **Right to Choose:** The ability to select from a choice of goods and services at reasonable pricing.
4. **Right to be Heard:** Consumers have the right to make a complaint and be heard if they are dissatisfied with a product or service.
5. **Right to seek redress:** The right to receive remedy or compensation for any exploitation
6. **Right to Consumer Education:** The right to acquire information and skills that will enable you to make informed purchases.

### CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Consumers should be knowledgeable about the market.
2. Consumers must be quality-conscious.
3. Use the goods safely.
4. Consumers should read labels carefully.
5. Insist on a cash memo.
6. The consumer must be honest.
7. The consumer must submit a complaint.
8. Form consumer organisations.
9. The consumer must respect the environment.
10. Demand a fair bargain.

### Complaints can be sent by:

- a) Consumers
- b) Registered Consumers' Associations
- c) Central or State Governments

- d) Individual consumers acting on behalf of others
- e) Legal heirs or representatives of dead consumers.

#### Complaints can be filed against:

- a) Unfair and Restrictive Trade Practices
- b) Defective Goods
- c) Deficient Services
- d) Excess Pricing
- e) Hazardous Goods
- f) Hazardous Services.

#### Three-tiered Redressal Agencies:

The customer Protection Act of 1986 established a three-tiered mechanism for the resolution of customer complaints:

1. **District Forum:** A complaint is filed when the demand does not exceed twenty lakhs.
2. **State Commission:** A complaint is filed when the claim exceeds 20 lakhs but does not exceed one crore.
3. **National Commission:** A complaint is filed when the demand exceeds \*1 crore.

#### Consumer Awareness -

*The role of consumer organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs):*

In India, a variety of consumer associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) work to defend and promote the interests of consumers. They educate consumers about their rights and publish a variety of magazines to spread awareness about consumer issues.