

Ch- 14 Consumer Awareness

Good Morning Student.

This lesson is of Class 10th for the subject of Economics. The topic for today is Food Adulteration and Consumer Protection which is covered in chapter 14 'Consumer Awareness' of your book Economics.

This lesson is being submitted to you on 25.11.2024 and the voice is of Mr Lokesh Arora.

All the students now please open page number 247 of your book and listen attentively.

Food Adulteration:

Food adulteration refers to the act of adding chemical substances to food which degrades the quality of food.

Food adulteration is the addition or mixing of inferior, harmful, substandard useless or unnecessary substances to foods. This spoils the nature and quality of food items and is considered food adulteration.

Forms of Adulteration:

- (1) Milk Adulteration
- (2) Adulteration of Fats and Oils
- (3) Food Grain Adulteration
- (4) Other Adulteration

Refer to page number 205 of your book for explanation
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Harmful Effects of Food Adulteration

Food adulteration can have a range of harmful effects on health. It cannot only lead to toxicity in the body but also can lead the body to paralysis or eventually death. Some of the adulterants are highly toxic for the body leading to heart failure, liver disorders, kidney disorders and many more.

Some of the harmful effects of adulteration are stated below.

- (1) Leads to chronic health problems.
- (2) Increases the impurity in the food.
- (3) Lack of nutritional value

For explanation refer to page number 206 of your book.

Consumer Protection Act,

This Act was passed by the government in 1986 for the protection of the consumer's rights which is known as COPRA. It is one of most important legal measures in protecting the rights of the consumer. The Act came in the force with effect from 1st July 1987. The act was amended in 1991, 1993 and 2002.

Features of This Act:-

- (1) The Act applies to all goods and services.

- (ii) It covers all the sectors whether public, private and co-operative.
- (iii) This Act provides a simple, convenient and inexpensive redressal of consumer grievances.
- (iv) The Act lays down time limits for the disposal of cases so as to provide speedy redressal of grievances.
- (v) Most important feature of the Act is the provision for setting up a three-tier redressal system, popularly known as consumer courts at National, State and District levels. At national level, it is called the 'National Consumer Commission' which is the apex court under the act and functions at Delhi. At the State level, consumer court is called 'State Consumer Commission'. And at the district level, the court is known as 'District Forum'.

These courts look into the grievances and complaints of the consumers against the traders and manufacturers and provide the necessary relief and compensation. At present, there are more than 500 district courts operating in the country.

Right to Information Act (RTI)

The Right to Information Act 2005 was passed on June 15, 2005 and

which came into force on October 13, 2005. The RTI Act gives citizens of India access to records of the central and the state governments.

Under the provisions of the Act any citizen of India may request for information from a public authority which is required to reply within 30 days. The Act also requires every public authority to computerise their records and publish certain categories of information so that citizens need minimum resource to request for information.

Under the Act, right to information includes the following

- (i) Request for information.
- (ii) Take copies of documents.
- (iii) Inspection of documents, records and work.
- (iv) Taking certified samples of materials of work.
- (v) Obtaining information in form of print-outs, tapes, video cassettes or any other electronic mode.

Process of obtaining information under Right To Information Act:-

Under the Act, all authorities covered must appoint Public Information Officers (PIO). It is the duty of PIO to provide information as desired. If the request is related to another public authority, (in whole or part), it is the responsibility of PIO to forward the concerned part

of the request to the other authority within period of 5 days. Besides, every public authority is also required to appoint Assistant Public Information Officers (APIO) to receive RTI requests and appeal for forwarding to the PIO's.

Other Consumer Protection Measures:-

In order to protect the interests of the consumers, the government adopted three strategies; legislative, administrative and technical measure.

We have already discussed legal measure i.e. Consumer Protection Act. Now we will discuss other two measures:-

(i) Administrative Measures:-

Most of the population in India is poor. People do not have the capability to purchase that foodgrain at market price. Therefore, the government aims at distributing the foodgrains among the common people at a price lower than the market price.

Thus distributing essential commodities through Public Distribution System ^(PDS) is an administrative measure. PDS with a network of 4.74 lakh Fair Price Shops is perhaps the largest distribution network of the world. Apart from

ensuring food security to the poor, the public distribution system is also expected to prevent hoarding, black marketing and over charging by traders.

(ii) Technical Measures:-

Technical Measures consist of standardisation of the products. Indian government has established 'Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Agmark.

BIS is for industrial and consumer goods, while Agmark is meant for agricultural products. BIS was earlier known as Indian Standards Institution (ISI). BIS has the responsibility of laying down standards for industrial and consumer goods on a scientific basis and certifying the goods that meet the standards and prescribed quality. In case of dissatisfaction with the quality of a certified product, a consumer can complain to the nearest regional office of the BIS.

Agmark is a certification mark employed on agricultural items in India guaranteeing that they conform to a set of standards affirmed by the 'Directorate of Marketing and Inspection'.

Agmark is implemented under the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act, 1937

as amended in 1986. This scheme is run by the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. Products such as honey, masala and spices carry such marks.

ECOMARK is a certification mark issued by the BIS to products conforming to a set of standards aimed at the least impact on the ecosystem. It was started in 1991.

With this, I am ending my topic here. I will give you few questions, you are requested to write the answers in your note-books.

- Ques 1. What is RTI Act? What is the process to get information under RTI Act?
- Ques 2. What is Food Adulteration? Explain its harmful effects.
- Ques 3. Write the features of Consumer Protection Act.
- Ques 4. Explain the technical measures to protect the consumers.