

Chapter 10

CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Consumers in India and perhaps in other developing countries too, face a wide range of problems in their day-to-day dealings with traders and various organisations, engaged in providing goods and services. These problems may be the result of scarcity, varying incomes, product development, environmental changes or social structure.

The consumer faces problems in markets, banks, government and private offices, hospitals, schools, public distribution agencies and other services. A few examples are being quoted in the hope that, the awareness of consumers will be increased and they will be ready to recognise and overcome them intelligently when faced with such situations.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO PRODUCTS

The consumer faces a number of serious problems with prices, quality and weights or volumes of products available in the market. These are summarised and discussed briefly in this section.

While profit motive in any business is not a crime, and is essential as an incentive for survival, and growth of the business, profiteering through illegal trading like blackmarketing, adulteration, etc., and objectionable malpractices such as deceptive packaging, short-weighting etc. are considered as unfair business practices. While suggesting amendments to MKTP Act 1969, the Sachar Committee proposed a list of unfair trade practices under MRTP Act to ensure legal protection to consumers. They are:-

- Lack of safety and absence of Quality Control regulations
- Food adulteration
- Short weights and measures
- Misuse of colouring matter
- Imitation manufacture (Misbranding)
- Blatantly misleading advertisements and advertising tactics
- Conspicuous consumption
- Hire-Purchase plans