

Effect of Intervention on Existing Knowledge of Consumers about Consumer Education

ANITA GAUTAM

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Department of Human Development and Family Studies
School for Home Science, BBAU, Lucknow, India

Dr. NEETU SINGH

Assistant Professor

Department of Human Development and Family Studies
School for Home Science, BBAU, Lucknow, India

Abstract:

A process of teaching, training and learning to improve knowledge and develop skills among consumers. The consumer education relates to imparting knowledge to and developing skills in consumers regarding consumer rights, consumer laws, product quality- standards, health aspects of various products, availabilities of various public and private services, units and measurements, redressal of consumer problems and making correct choices while buying different commodities etc. On the basis of pilot study, three hundred women were selected who headed their families. This study was conducted for three months to assess the consumer awareness and knowledge about consumer rights, consumer protection, consumer laws, food safety & standard acts and food marks & symbols. For preliminary study 300 samples were selected out of which 150 randomly selected women were subjected to an Intervention, Education and Counseling (IEC) session following KAP scores related habits. The pre-designed and pre tested questionnaire used for collection the data. It was found that before intervention majority of consumers had low scores on consumer rights, consumer protection, consumer laws, food safety and food marks. All the consumers (N=300) had low scores for consumer protection and consumer laws. High scores were reported

only for 2 items – consumer rights and food marks by 3 (1%) and 9 (3%) consumers respectively. Mean scores were maximum for the item food marks (1.48±0.56) whereas for the items consumer protection and consumer laws the mean scores were minimum (1.00±0.00). After the intervention, majority of consumers had high scores for all the items. Maximum number of consumers with high score were observed for the item food marks (n=136; 90.7%). Minimum number of consumers with high scores were observed for the items consumer protection and consumer laws respectively (n=109; 72.7%). Mean scores were minimum for the item consumer protection (2.60±0.70) and maximum for the item food marks (2.91±0.29).

Key words: Consumer education, intervention, redress

INTRODUCTION

Consumer education is the preparation of an individual through skills, concepts and understanding that are required for everyday living to achieve maximum satisfaction and utilization of his resources.

A process of teaching, training and learning to improve knowledge and develop skills among consumers. The consumer education relates to imparting knowledge to and developing skills in consumers regarding consumer rights, consumer laws, product quality- standards, health aspects of various products, availabilities of various public and private services, units and measurements, redressal of consumer problems and making correct choices while buying different commodities etc.

The numerous problems mentioned earlier clearly bring out the need for us to be well informed and vigilant. This will enable us to make the best purchases and get the maximum value for our money. It will also discourage traders from using unfair and deceptive ways. However, we or Government alone cannot protect all the consumers. Therefore, all consumers should fulfill their responsibilities and unite to protect

themselves. A strong and active consumer movement is the most effective way of removing consumer problems. Consumer education helps people to develop a strong consumer movement.

METHODOLOGY

On the basis of pilot study, three hundred women were selected who headed their families. This study was conducted for three months in urban area of Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh state. Women were selected randomly and purposively on the basis of availability of sample from household. This study was conducted for three months to assess the consumer awareness and knowledge about consumer rights, consumer protection, consumer laws, food safety & standard acts and food marks & symbols. For preliminary study 300 samples were selected out of which 150 randomly selected women were subjected to an Intervention, Education and Counseling (IEC) session following KAP scores related habits. The pre-designed and pre tested questionnaire used for collection the data.

RESULTS

Preliminary Study-Before Intervention

1. Level of awareness about Consumer Rights before intervention

It is evident from **Table-1** that 9.33% respondents (28) were aware about 'right to redress'. Nine per cent respondents (27) were aware about 'right to choice', where as 8.66% (26) were know about right to safety', 8.33% (25) were know about right to heard' and 7.00% (21) aware were about 'right to heard'.

Table-1 Knowledge wise distribution of Consumer Rights among study subject (N=300)

S.No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Right to safety	26	8.66
2.	Right to information	21	7.00
3.	Right to choice	27	9.00
4.	Right to heard	25	8.33
5.	Right to redress	28	9.33
6.	Right to consumer education	19	6.33

Only 6.33% per cent of respondents (19) were aware about 'right to consumer education' from 300 respondents.

2. Level of awareness about Consumer Protection before intervention

Consumer protection as per their knowledge in **Table-2** shows that respondents (9.00) i.e. 3.00% were aware about 'product liability', and 'fraud misrepresentation'

Table-2 Frequency Distribution of Consumer Protection as per their knowledge (N=300)

S.No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Product liability	9	3.00
2.	Privacy rights	7	2.33
3.	Unfair business practices	8	2.66
4.	Fraud misrepresentation	9	3.00

Eight respondents (2.66%) were aware about unfair business practices and 7 respondents i.e. 2.33% were aware about privacy rights from 300 respondents.

3. Level of awareness about Consumer Laws before intervention

The existing knowledge about consumer laws deals with wide range of issues. **Table-3** shows that 26.00 respondents (8.66%) were familiar with 'product safety, followed by 'pricing' (23.00) i.e. 7.66%. and only 20 respondents (6.66%) were familiar with 'service'.

Table-3 Existing Knowledge about Consumer Laws (N=300)

S.No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Credit repair	0	0.00%
2.	Debt repair	0	0.00%
3.	Product safety	26	8.66%
4.	Service	20	6.66%
5.	Sales contract	0	0.00%
6.	Bill collector regulation	0	0.00%
7.	Pricing	23	7.66
8.	Utility turnoffs	0	0.00%

Almost all the respondents were not even heard about 'credit repair', 'debt repair', 'sales contract', 'bill collector regulation', 'consolidation' and 'personal loans that may lead to bankruptcy'.

4. Level of awareness about Food Safety and Standard Act before intervention

Table-4 shows that respondents (31) i.e. 10.33% were know about 'prevention of food adulteration act' and 'milk & milk products order' followed by 'fruit products order, and 'vegetable oil products (control) order' (9.66%).

Table-4 Percentage Distribution of Knowledge on Food Safety and Standard Act (N=300)

S.No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Prevention of food adulteration act	31	10.33
2.	Fruits products order	29	9.66
3.	Meat food products order	23	7.66
4.	Vegetable oil products (control) order	29	9.66
5.	Edible oils packaging (regulation) order	18	6.00
6.	Solvent extracted oil, de oiled meal & edible	0	0.00
7.	Milk and milk products order	31	10.33
8.	Essential commodities acts, relating to food	0	0.00

Twenty three respondents i.e. 7.66% were aware about 'meat food products order'. Whereas only six per cent respondents were aware about edible oils packaging (regulation) order and no one know about 'solvent extracted oil, de oiled meal & edible' and 'essential commodities acts, relating to food'.

5. Level of awareness about Food Marks and Symbols before intervention

Table-5 Percentage Distribution of Food Marks and Symbols (N=300)

S.No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Total	
1.	AGMARK	169	56.33%	300	100
2.	Green mark	157	52.33%	300	100
3.	Red mark	154	51.33%	300	100

Data in **Table-5** indicates that 56.33% respondents (169.00) know about AGMARK. Respondents (157) i.e. 52.33% know about green mark whereas 51.33% respondents (154) know about red mark.

6. Level of knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding consumer education before intervention

Before intervention majority of consumers had low scores on consumer rights, consumer protection, consumer laws, food safety and food marks.

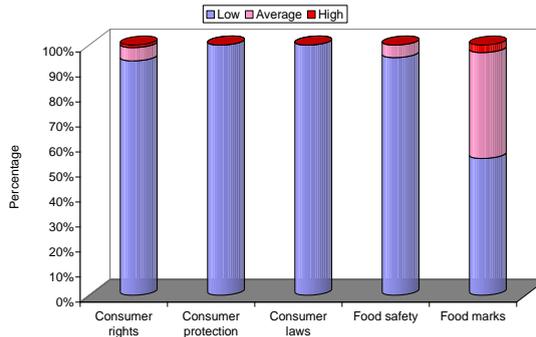
Table -6: Pre-intervention knowledge, attitude and practices (N=300)

SN	Variable	KAP Levels			Mean Score±SD
		Low (Score 1)	Average (Score 2)	High (Score 3)	
1.	Consumer rights	281	16	3	1.07±0.30
2.	Consumer protection	300	0	0	1.00±0.00
3.	Consumer laws	300	0	0	1.00±0.00
4.	Food safety	285	15	0	1.05±0.22
5.	Food marks	164	127	9	1.48±0.56

*Low- <25%

*Average-25-75%

*High->75%



All the consumers (N=300) had low scores for consumer protection and consumer laws. High scores were reported only for 2 items – consumer rights and food marks by 3 (1%) and 9 (3%) consumers respectively.

Mean scores were maximum for the item food marks (1.48 ± 0.56) whereas for the items consumer protection and consumer laws the mean scores were minimum (1.00 ± 0.00). **Khapre, M.P. et al. (2011)** also found that 68.5% Households, wife (home-maker) buys the grocery. Majority of them never read the food labels. All the selected food items were adulterated ranging from 76% to 11%. **Kalyan Bgchi (2000)** revealed that respondent's awareness related to rights and responsibilities was good but poor related to food adulteration.

Post Study- After Intervention

7. Level of knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding consumer education after intervention

After the intervention, majority of consumers had high scores for all the items. Maximum number of consumers with high score were observed for the item food marks (n=136; 90.7%).

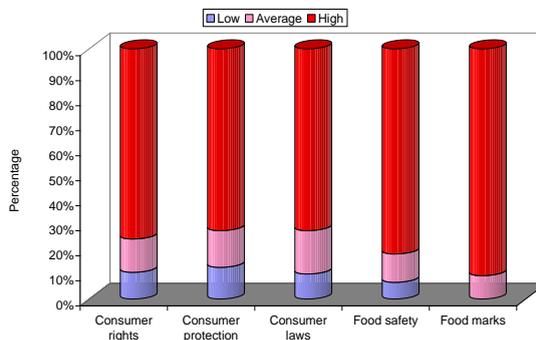
Table 1: Post-intervention level of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (n=150)

SN	Variable	KAP Levels			Mean Score±SD
		Low (Score 1)	Average (Score 2)	High (Score 3)	
1.	Consumer rights	16	20	114	2.65±0.67
2.	Consumer protection	19	22	109	2.60±0.70
3.	Consumer laws	15	26	109	2.63±0.66
4.	Food safety	10	17	123	2.75±0.57
5.	Food marks	0	14	136	2.91±0.29

*Low- <25%

*Average-25-75%

*High->75%



Minimum number of consumers with high scores were observed for the items consumer protection and consumer laws respectively (n=109; 72.7%). Mean scores were minimum for the item consumer protection (2.60±0.70) and maximum for the item food marks (2.91±0.29).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that little more than 50.00% respondents were aware about marks and symbols used on the packed food items but regarding other parameters of consumer education, less than 15.00% with low level of awareness (<25%) were only aware about it. But after intervention majority of respondents had scores high level of knowledge (>75%).

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