

# Historicising Consumer Consciousness: State's Response and Comparative Analysis of Modern Global Consumer Movement – An Indian Perspective

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**Abstract:** *Consumer is the fundamental entity of market forces in 21<sup>st</sup> century. But, their protection and empowerment have been a historical matter of concern where different states responded with different tactics. In the ancient times where the Hammurabi Code of law or Roman Emperor diktats showed the way in Europe, in India, it has been the Dharmashastras and Dharmasutras paving the way for subsequent laws on consumer protection. The medieval ages saw fall in trade and commerce practices still Allaudin's market control or Protestants trade ethics guided the way. The modern era has seen the phases of consumer movement where modern laws from US to Britain or Africa to India have been an enlightening experience of research in this fast, digitalising world. Consumer Protection Act, 1986 has been the lighthouse of Indian consumer movement where Right to Information, the hierarchical Redressal mechanism and later wider interpretation of Art. 21 resulted in NGT and its consumer friendly judgements. Consumerism is now ubiquitous and hence its study on the basis of historical experience paves for a better future ahead.*

**Keywords:** Consumerism, Empowerment, Protection, Digitalising, Redressal

## 1. Introduction

Consumer and consumerism is ubiquitous in our everyday's surroundings. Centuries have passed and so our needs, but as the new dawn arrives with newer challenges-the market marginalising tricks have alienated the consumers on the wayside. With the influx of technological innovations and newer demands- goods as well as services have become the common means of transaction. The importance and the role of consumers have become more pertinent in present age of liberalised global economy. Hence, the collective consciousness of consumers as a distinct class arose in response to situational demand. Equally important has been the states' responses, meddling in market affairs as and when required. The result is as externally stimulated through socio economic factors as internally evolved in contextual need of the time. Consumerism is positive in reflection to the high yielded production and also litmus to the existence of a healthy economy.

Under Guideline 3 the UNGCP set out a conventional definition while recognising the need for flexibility. "The term 'consumer' generally refers to a natural person, regardless of nationality, acting primarily for personal, family or household purposes, while recognizing that Member States may adopt differing definitions to address specific domestic needs". [1] March 15 is popularly celebrated as World Consumer Day ever year. This celebration is unique as in each one of us; there is a consumer if we open to the outward society. Secondly, the consumer and consumerism binary is no more a theoretical aspect if one comprehends in a security conscious deceitful world. With the advent of extra territorial technologies and mushrooming of dark web consumerism, states do fight hard to protect respective interests. Thirdly, as it itself asserts

now as a separate class, its populism deserves protection even from political angle. Often it becomes difficult for state to balance the produco-consumer equilibrium which indeed affects the health of overall economy and micro economic parameters.

Lastly, from sociological perspective, a consumer is a thread of the societal fabric on which the bigger superstructure of whole economical merchandise functions. Hence, its study, through the prism of history and law becomes quite interesting. A comparative analysis of events and processes makes one more insightful with the chosen field of study. This article deals with some of these relevant fissures picking up the wholesome narrative of consumerism since ancient times. It also focuses on the states responses through diktats, implementing prevalent norms or through legislations as and when required. Lastly, a brief analysis of consumer movements across the globe with special contrasts to Indian shades and the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) 1986 has also been incorporated in this analytical piece. Although the range of references and list of reports from national and global organisation has duly been referred in, the central theme remains the quest for improvement and strength to the intellectual tilt pillaring for the betterment of consumer condition.

## 2. Consumer Protection in Ancient World

Consumer Protection seems a century old practice if we tread the pages of history cautiously. Ranging from doctored products to adulterated goods and substances, there were strict rules and regulations to monitor of the corruption to consumers. Even the import and exports of necessary items were regulated keeping market interests, natural fury and consumer concern in mind. The Hammurabi Code of 2000

BC talks about the ethical and accountable trade practices in medium of exchange. Code 104 of Hammurabi reads, "If a merchant gives an agent corn, wool, oil, or any other goods to transport, the agent shall give a receipt for the amount and compensate the merchant there for. Then he shall obtain a receipt from the merchant for the money that he gives the merchant". [2]

Even if the resources were scanty, there were provisions of timely relief to the consuming population. In 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, in Athens, there were regulations for the controlled import and exports of grain. There were Market officials (*agoranomoi*) who ensured the quality of goods in market and *sitophylaktes* (grain supervisors) in Greece market. [3] Even the Roman Emperors had great control over trade and concern for fair consumer transactions. There was system of guaranteed supply (the *annona* system), there were specific officials like *the praefectus annonae* (in charge of grain supply). Evidence of state control can be seen in the many goods which were stamped or carried markers indicating their origin or manufacturer and in some cases guaranteeing their weight, purity or genuineness. [4]

Talking on Indian ancient history context, the consumer wellbeing and consumer protection remained high on priority. If the prosperous Indus Valley Civilisation (2500 BCE) is to be viewed, a robust presence of trade and commerce- both inland and foreign, confirms higher value for ethical transaction practices. The standard weight and measures, perfect binary ratios for valuing goods throughout the huge urbanised pockets of Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Dholavira, Lothal, Chanhudaro and other places reveal the centralised control. The Dharmashastras and Dharmasutras laid down the regulations of social transaction and consumer relations through extensive barter. The Shrutis and Smritis – both provide extensive data of initial consumer relations and a fair professional conduct is desired.

It is no surprise, that the strongest penalty including social boycott, exclusion and even death is common if that unwritten usage of consumerism is flawed at any point. Among the Vedas, the most authoritative for earliest transaction, remains the Atharva Veda. This shows great Aryan-Unaryan contacts and contains charms and local practices full with normative guides. Among the various post Vedic texts, Manu Smriti (800-600BC), Susruta Samhita (600BCE), the Yajnavalkya Smriti (300-100 BC), the Narada Smriti (100-200 AD), the Charak samhita (100-200 AD), the Brihaspati Smriti (200-400 AD) and the Katyayana Smriti (300-600 AD) etc deals with the professional ethics and state obligation of consumer protection. [5]

**Manu Smriti** deals primarily with the social norms and regulations, the code of conduct for traders have also been enumerated. For example, Manu on adulteration and mixing of inferior products says, "one commodity mixed with other must not be sold (as pure), nor a bad one (as good) not less (as the designated weight) nor anything that is at hand or that is concealed." [6] Similarly, the relation of contractual interaction is too dealt as, "A contract made by a person intoxicated or insane or grievously disordered (by

disease) and so forth or wholly dependent, by an infant or a very aged man or by an unauthorised party is invalid". [7] As per Manusmriti, it was the State which fixed the rates for purchase and sale of essential marketable goods. He says, "The man who behaves dishonestly to honest customers or cheats in his prices shall be fined in the first or in the middle most amercement." [8] There was regular inspection of all weights and measures every six months and the reports were to duly submitted to the higher state authority.

For the qualification of a dignified ancient nurse or health care taker, the eligibility as set by **Sushruta Samhita** states, "That person alone is fit to nurse or to attend the bedside of a patient, who is cool-headed and pleasant in his demeanour, does not speak ill of anybody, is strong and attentive to the requirements of the sick, and strictly and indefatigably follows the instructions of the physician." [9] Even the **Charak Samhita** states that for the sad and shattered patient lying on the hospital bed having trust in the physician, if a masked, fake doctor prescribes the medicine faking the knowledge on pretention, such liars are not even worthy to be communicated and deserves hell. [10] Similar were the ancient doctrines of the civil law of consumerism where the checks and balances remained with ethical norms of transaction. **Yajnavalkya** states, "In the case of a pledge, a gift and a sale however evidence in support of the prior claim preponderates". Hence, doctored reselling or misguided transactions were to be discouraged. [11]

**Kautilya's Arthashastra** remains one of the most authoritative texts on ancient Indian statecraft and trade facilitation. The consumer protection issue is although blurred yet impactful in segments of Law of Transactions (Vyavahara) as dealt in detail in Arthashastra. [12] The role of state and omnipotent King's presence guarantees the ethical trade practices as desired by Arthashastra. In Manu and later Dharmashastras we find a section on the eighteen 'feet' of transactions (Vyavahara) or dispute (vivada), contained in a new topic of Rajdharma, which does not exist in earlier dharma texts. "It is entirely possible that the Arthashastra of Kautilya was the source of this material on transactions for the laws of Manu." [13] Panyadyaksha (the director of trade) was the responsible official to check overall transactions and monitor the fair trade and commerce.

The director of trade had to be "conversant with the difference in the prices of commodities of high value and of low value and the popularity or unpopularity of goods of various kinds whether produced on land or in water [and] whether they ...arrived along land routes or water routes [and] also [should know about] suitable times for resorting to dispersal or concentration, purchase or sale". [14] The hoarding of food grains was especially discouraged and there were provisions to tackle the monopoly of the traders. Similarly any unwarranted profit or unnecessary pain to customer in form of black marketing was clearly denounced. Panyadyaksha advised to "Avoid even a big profit that would be injurious to the subjects. . . . He should not create a restriction as to time or the evil of a glut in the market in the case of commodities constantly in demand." [15]

Artisans (*karukara*) and traders (*vaidehaka*) were among the most scrutinised professions and the state had constant

watch over them. In fact, the first two topics of book four of Arthashastra are called 'keeping a watch over artisans' and 'keeping a watch over traders'[16] All major malpractices in profession are suitably discussed and punishment as per the fault was the normal norm of society. "For artisans and artisans who by conspiring together bring about deterioration in the quality of work or increase in profit or cause a hindrance to buying and selling, the fine is one thousand panas. For traders, too who by conspiring together to hoard goods (to create an artificial scarcity in order to raise prices) or sell them at high price, the fine is one thousand panas." [17] Even the selling or barter was frequently regularised by the state. For example, "goods could not be sold at the place of their origin, field or factory. They were to be carried to the appointed markets (panya sala) where the dealer had to declare particulars as to the quantity, quality and the prices of his goods which were examined and registered in the books." [18] Even the justice to consumers under civil matter was more accessible during Mauryan times. "The judges were empowered to take cognizance of the cases of disadvantaged persons who could not approach the court, for example, the cases concerning ascetics, women and minors, old, sick and helpless people." [19]

### 3. Consumer Protection in Medieval world

Even in the 'dark ages' of Europe and when the shackles of feudalism were rigid in the first millennium after Christ, the barter worked ethically albeit in a limited context. The post Renaissance period on the planks of protestant ethics got a boost in trade and commerce. Even the transition from feudalism to capitalism catalysed in response to the rising consumer class and its interests in 15<sup>th</sup> century western world. The colonial conquest definitely had market and trade in its own minds and being consumer friendly was imminent among the rival powers.

Insufficient supply than of lacking entitlements was the major concern in pre modern times as in our modern age, an insight we owe to Amartya Sen, that has been applied to medieval markets by, among others, Meghnad Desai and Stephan Epstein. "It is precisely this form of deprivation caused by inability to access the market because of insufficient finances – a lack of entitlement, in Sen's terms – that medieval legislators attempted to address, *inter alia*, by setting specific times when resellers were allowed to buy, and the sorts of prices that could be charged of local consumers, and forbidding hoarding to sell at higher prices as a practice that could both cause and also take unfair advantage of scarcity (effects of modern free markets that many third-world populations feel all too often in our own time)." [20] The consumer concerns did have their own challenges and layers of market tussles even during those middle ages as we see them often today. It's the competitive theory only that aspires for a robust marketing mechanism and the same was thought during those times in Europe as well. It simply aspired for the government to hold the ring and not the whip in hand, to make consumer collectively sovereign but individually devoid of bargaining power in market, the scarcity and opportunity costs to be the factors of production [21]- which obviously the modern consumer

movement sought to rectify or simply struggles for the broader sovereign empowerment.

Coming towards the medieval Indian context, the roots to consumerism and state's response is fragmentary yet worth evaluating. Be it the early medieval Cholas or the Sultanate at Delhi, be it the prosperous Deccan sultans and Vijayanagara empire of South or the Mighty Mughals in North- there are exemplary traces of consumer protection if the sources are to be scrutinised. The price control and market regulation of Alauddin Khalji remains an eye opener to consumer concerns however evolved it was for the military management. The scale of fixed prices was maintained as long as Alauddin lived and the grain never rose a *dang* whether the rain was abundant or scanty. This unvarying price of grain in the markets was looked upon as one of the wonders of the time. [22]

There was severe punishment for the dishonest which Barani elaborates, "The fourth regulation for securing cheapness provided severe punishments; blows, and cutting off flesh from the haunches of those who gave short weight". [23] Muhammad Bin Tughlaq continued the welfare policy of the buyers and the robust trade and commerce was inciting to the consumer class. Same continued by the prosperous kingdoms of Bahmani Sultans and the Vijayanagara kings. The Ain-i-Akbari talks about the trade regulation in Akbar's realm [24] and the Jehangir's chain of justice was open to all types of complainants including the consumerism wrongs.

### 4. Consumer Protection in the modern world

Consumerism in its modern sense is actually a subject of modern construct. Post the Industrial revolution and on the waves of laissez-faire and comparative advantageous mass production, the consciousness and advanced transaction was the new normal of 19<sup>th</sup> century world. Max Weber sees the new consciousness in response to the emerging market interests and the ethical transaction as the definite need for a rising populous class. Another feature making its study relevant if the future prospects of a multicultural consumerism where the world is intricately woven into mutually dependent global fabrics with growing globalisation. Of course, there are breaks into this modern consumerism epoch with vibrant legislations and growing consciousness by masses, yet the continuities of saving the vulnerable still remain high on agenda.

#### United States

History of modern United States began since its 1776 declaration of Independence, where the economic interests and the growing sense of welfare reaping the higher share of industrialisation remained in sight. The Sherman Act of 1890 was the first major legislation based on modern values of trust and respect. [25] Conspiracy in context of honest trade and commerce and lacking transparency were summarily out to be illegal. Further limitations were tried to be settled through two major legislations of 1914 namely the Federal Trade Commission Act, 1914 and the Clayton Act. Robinson Patman Act, 1936 did away with price discrimination. The Fair Packaging Act, 1972 and the Consumer Product Safety Act, 1972 provide protection to the consumer in several ways. The United States has even

today, the most comprehensive and well established anti-trust and consumer protection law in the world. "At the state level, many states have adopted the Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act including, but not limited to, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, and Nebraska." [26]

#### **Canada**

Its trade control and consumer concern begins with 1889 Trade Control act. The purpose of the legislation was to stamp with illegality the agreements which had been carried into effect for preventing and lessening competition. Combines Investigation Act, 1910 enhanced the area of investigation which also covered mergers, trusts and monopolies operating to the common detriment. "By 1918, there was strong public demand to check rising prices resulting in the board of Commerce Act and the Combines and Fair Prices Act 1919. In 1923, a new Combines Investigation Act was passed which was amended many a times in 1951, 1962, 1960, 1969 and 1976." [27] These all amendments have much larger spectrum covering unfair practices if mistrust persisted to the strong deterrence of monetary and physical fines. Misleading advertisements and other deceptive practices were considered and the Combines Investigation Act, 1969 was codified. The Act was further amended to make the provisions of Unfair Trade Practices more stringent and effective.

#### **United Kingdom**

By 1946, Anti-Monopoly legislation came in place to make the market more decentralise. Between 1948 and 1973 a number of statutes were passed for this purpose. Subsequent acts till 1973 Fair trading Act were in stimulus response to the evolving market forces. The FTA, 1973 works through two administrating wings- Director General of Fair Trading and Consumer Protection Advisory Committees. The Competition Act, 1980 checks the anti competitiveness measures and corrects the unfair market principles. "The Consumer Protection Act; 1987 has been passed by the Parliament of Great Britain very similar to our own COPRA 1986 with a strong vision for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Consumerism and a light to different third world countries". [28] This Act focuses primarily on product liability, unsafe goods, honest professionalism, bogus advertisements and misleading price indications.

#### **Australia**

1906 saw first antitrust Legislation in Australia. The Australian Industries Preservation Act was based on the Sherman Act, 1890 of the United States and most of its acts were suited borrowing from the Western World and The US. The Trade Practices Act, 1974 provides very strong legislative measures to promote efficiency and competition in business, to control restrictive trade practices and to protect the consumers from unfair trade practices. It is as wide ranging as the COPRA 1986 with advanced restraints of consumer luring like offering gifts and prizes with the intention of not providing them and new digit challenges with hazardous e-safety measures. [29]

#### **Japan**

The Anti-Monopoly Act came in Japan in 1947. Working on more socialist principles, it discouraged accumulation of wealth in hands of few. The Act has laid down provisions to

check acquisition of business, assets or management of another company; mergers of directorship. The Act contains provisions against discrimination of prices, imposing of undue conditions etc. It also attempts to protect the interest of the consumers from misleading representation, prize competition etc. Further for additional legislations work on in concurrence -The Marine Transport Act, 1949; The Export and Import Trading Act, 1952; "The Small and Medium sized Enterprise Organisation Act, 1957, and Act against The Unjustifiable Premium and Misleading representations 1962 to deal with the problems of Monopolies, Restrictive and Unfair Trade Practices". [30]

#### **European Union (EU)**

Within the EU market economy, consumers must be given the right tools if they are to play their role of drivers of the market. Trusting the market and a free choice to a consumer is practically what makes a consumer empowered. To meet the ambitious goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, an ambitious EU consumer policy to achieve empowering consumer rights in 21<sup>st</sup> century has been envisioned which can be embedded into the Europe 2020 priorities. Two measures guides the present EU consumer policy: the **European Consumer Agenda**, which is the new strategy for EU consumer policy in line with the EU's growth strategy – Europe 2020 – and the **consumer programme 2014-20** – the financial framework complementing the strategy. The four major areas of concern tackled through them are- improving consumer safety; enhancing knowledge; improving implementation, stepping up enforcement and securing redress as well as aligning rights and key policies to economic and societal challenges. [31]

#### **5. Consumer Protection in Modern India**

Towards the Indian scenario, the legalisation of British undoubtedly codified the ancient dharmashastras and dharmasutras with western fusion. In Pre British India there were multiple overlapping jurisdictions and it was indeed a difficult task for the British to come up with uniform legislation for the vast stretch of Indian geography [32]. It acknowledged the concerns of the new class and came loaded in response with some of the laws which were passed during the British regime concerning consumer interests are: the Indian Contract Act of 1872, the Sale of Goods Act of 1930, the Indian Penal Code of 1860, the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940, the Usurious Loans Act of 1918, and the Agriculture Procedure (Grading and Marketing Act) of 1937. These laws provided specific legal protection for consumers. "For fifty-five years, the Sale of Goods Act of 1930 [SGA] was the exclusive source of consumer protection in India." [33]

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of nation, attached great importance to what he described as the "poor consumer", who according to him should be the principal beneficiary of the consumer movement. He said: "A Consumer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us we are on him. He is not an interruption to our work; he is the purpose of it. We are not doing a favour to a consumer by giving him an opportunity. He is doing us a favour by giving an opportunity to serve him." [34] Right to Life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution deliberately guarantees

a dignified life and choice which obviously inspired the further legislations on consumer behaviour in succeeding years.

### **Consumer Protection Act, 1986**

*An Act to provide for the better protection of the interest of consumers and for that purpose to make provision for the establishment of consumer councils and other authorities for the settlement of consumers' disputes and for matters connected therewith.*[35]

### **Salient features of the COPRA 1986**

The Act empowers citizen in multifarious ways- dealing the justice from the very Grassroots to larger pinnacle of union administration. India was a pioneer in consumer advocacy with the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), a path breaking legislation at the time, enacted in 1986 and the establishment of a separate government department dedicated to consumer affairs as early as in 1997. [36] Translating this mandate into action entails:

- Enabling consumers to make informed choices;
- Ensuring fair, equitable and consistent outcomes for consumers; and
- Facilitating timely and effective consumer grievance redress.

It further did not merely substantiate the consumer protection, in fact the later legislations like National Green Tribunal Act 2010 sparks from the environmental protection and other consumer concerns. Even a hazard on the living river entities through reckless personal gains is exemplary in punishment in India. [37]

### **Consumer Strengthening**

The world has moved a long way as far the consumer movement is studied in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Now it is a genuinely global concern and even multilateral bodies like WTO, UN and EU are railing major concerns and issuing guidelines. UN Guidelines on Consumer Affairs (as expanded in 1999) gives primary attention to Consumer health and safety, right to informed choices, consumer education, fair and speedy concern redressal mechanism, larger role to Global NGOs and extra territorial autonomous bodies and a promotion to sustainable consumer consumption pattern. [38] Obtaining market Intelligence is a new avenue of research where the real strengthening of consumer in this digital age lies with technology. Not only the UN guidelines but even the latest wave of consumer awakening in far off Africa is focussing on digital literacy and market intelligence. Regular meetings among various stake holders to discuss emerging market issue and consumer concerns clearing are more encouraging. [39]

Consumer still is one of the most vulnerable receivers of mistrust, cheating, fraud and outsmarted section in larger web of market forces. The unprecedented digitalisation has its own concerns with larger faction of transaction shifting to virtual currencies and non personal interactions between a seller and a buyer. Second major threat is coming through

the bogus luring of products and round the clock misguiding audio-visual advertisements through mass media. The security threat, including data theft and financial fraud is a rampant area of concern in semi digitalised third world countries. Lastly, the verbal trust generation if unmatched with practical legislations and in absence of requisite penalty, the most illiterates and the backwards would continue to be the worst sufferer. The areas of concerns are different for different countries hence the responses too must be in consonance with local demands. A thriving and inclusive digitalisation process necessitates consumers' trust in digital markets and that trust must be unbroken for larger good.

As suggested by the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP) the demand-side of the market needs to be brought into the spotlight. Better Data Collection, valid indicators of research and further studies would be the enhancing sample space in response to 21<sup>st</sup> century consumerism. It could be a simple survey based response with larger respondents from different market spaces. Indicators, data-gathering methodologies and G20-wide data sets exist only for a few indicators; hence a double-fledged approach to address these gaps is necessary. Awareness on economic and social development and environmental protection and alarm through NGOs and other civil societies could be furthering the accessible ways. In parallel, the G20 should initiate a four-step process to develop a comprehensive methodology in order to provide data in the mid and long term- 1) Setting up a Consumer Protection and Empowerment Working Group for the Digital World to agree on an overall framework. 2) Set of indicators and corresponding methodologies in detail to be decided by an international organisation 3) pilot study and be refined which could further act as a model for the larger world 4) presentation of the draft to the G20 Working Group for revision and approval. [40]

### **Learning from the Past**

There are indeed things to learn from the past but definitely adapting with the modern ways of legislation. The states were quite easily accessible in Ashoka's or Jehangir's times and hence a delayed, cumbersome justice resembles a denied justice. It would be better to transform the implementing machinery which would be responsive to the cheated buyers compassionately or accessible and less complex legal machinery to a challenging semi literate consumer. Secondly what the learning from past reflects is a more collective welfare in mind than the mere motives of individual profit maximisation. When we talk about special measures during natural calamities or say fixing the price for large consumer goods- this socialist reflection come to the fore. Of course, the modern society is different, but the collective consciousness of integral humanism should definitely have a place in market transaction. Another aspect as being reflected from Hammurabi Code of compulsory receipt being mandatory for all products sold. Here the triangular frame of transaction involving the exchangers (a seller, a buyer) and the State as implementer-all need to carry the responsibility for fair transaction in market.

## 6. Conclusion

A lot depends upon the consumer awareness and required education to differentiate between the fair and unfair. It's true that the world has moved much ahead from weighing less or putting magnets underneath balances to trick the buyers but the large swathe of country like India is still novice in the modern age of digitalised challenge. State cannot be everywhere to protect them from unfair deals but if enhanced in knowledge and bargaining power; and bearing in mind that consumers should have the right of access to non-hazardous products, as well as the right to promote just, equitable and sustainable market orientation, could be the greater key to the menacing issue. Of course the State intervention would be necessary. Merely financial Inclusion is not empowering, their daily fair transaction and the track over hard earned resources not being robbed is also a concern. Taxation enhances its financial coffers and more regularised and reasonably supervised exchanges generate long lasting market trust.

Lastly, the world is again seeing a rise of protectionism in packets of global order and it becomes challenging for individual nation to face global challenges of consumerism in isolation. Although the countries are at loggerheads to save their producers at WTO or UN bodies, a larger concern for accessible consumerism on Rolls Distributive justice parameters must not be left the wayside.

Refurbishing of technology and electronic goods and dumping of cheaper products must not pass the domains of ethical sustainability because profit maximisation may be the last message of capitalism but ecological concerns and saving mother earth for sustainability deserves challenging answers. What more is expected is dissipation of information technology which could play the pivotal role in 21<sup>st</sup> century consumer literacy. Of Course, the beginning has been made in almost all corners of world but the consumer consciousness would still feel larger waves. In India's case the challenges are manifold because of the huge consumer consumption and less penetration of trusted technology. Civil Societies and NGOs must be ready for larger roles and state through ISO, Hallmarks, ISI marks, FSSAI and other institutions should be better harbinger of consumer equality. The COPRA 1986 or NGT Act 2010 is encouraging examples but the battle is not over as challenges reorient with the phasing times and hence so the desired State's responses.

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