

**Three Day Training Programme on Capacity Building for the
Researchers on Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare at
Annamalai University (Tamil Nadu)**

(April 18-20, 2011)

The Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi under the Consultancy Project on **“Promoting Involvement of Research Institutions, Universities and Colleges in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare”** in collaboration with Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar (Tamil Nadu) organized a **3 Day Training Programme on Capacity Building for Researchers in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare** from **April 18-20, 2011**. The programme was sponsored by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India. Thirty one participants from various universities and colleges in Tamil Nadu participated in the programme. The objectives of the programme were to: explain the need and importance of Consumer Protection and Welfare; elucidate the basic provisions of the Consumer Protection Act and other legislations having a bearing on Consumer Protection; and clarify basic requirements of qualitative and quantitative research methodology relevant for research in the area of Consumer Protection and Welfare. The basic purpose of the programme was to generate interest in the area among the researchers and to encourage them to take research in various related areas of consumer protection where there exists a gap.



Dignitaries lighting the lamp at the Workshop

On the occasion Dr. M. Syed Zafar, Professor and Head, Management Wing, DDE, Annamalai University welcomed the dignitaries the participants of the programme. He said that are number of sectors where the consumers being cheated and consumer faces deficiency services. The benefits in number of sectors are reaching to the beneficiaries. In such a scenario, consumer protection has become the of the hour. Further in the globalised world with technological advancements the consumer is new and difficult challenges. In such a scenario educating the consumers about their rights has become all more important. Further the areas where there is lack of information exists there is need for in-depth research. With this objective in mind the Directorate of Distance Education, Management Wing is organising this three day workshop under the age is of the Consultancy Project on “Promoting Involvement of Research Institutions, Universities and Colleges in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare” to generate interest in the academicians to take up research in this area.



Dr. M. Syed Zafar, Head, Management Wing, DDE, Annamalai University delivering the Welcome Address

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Dr. S. B. Nageshwara Rao, Director, D.D.E delivering the Presidential Address

Dr. S. B. Nageshwara Rao, Director, D.D.E, Annamalai University in his Presidential Address thanked the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Indian Institute of Public Administration for providing financial grant for conducting such informative and knowledge building programmes. Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare is a good topic for study and research and also useful in our day to day life as all of us are consumers. For management people this topic is discussed day in and day out but from the perspective of

business and management. The management to make the business successful projects that the way they are conducting the business is the best and they are consumer friendly. For making business successful they are putting their heart and soul into the business. But not much is being done for consumer welfare and grievance redressal by the business community. In such a

perspective it becomes important to sensitise the faculty and students of the management courses who are going to join business tomorrow about consumer protection.

We say the consumer is king so whatever you do in your business should be suitable and according to the requirement of consumer. Today consumer has a lot of choices available to him. In this aspect you can definitely say that he is a king. But when it comes to information regarding these products and after sale service he is in a precarious situation. The information given to the consumer is either incomplete or misleading. The business needs to understand that if the product is good the consumer will come back and if the product is bad the product will come back. We have to think for the betterment of the consumer as well as the producer. There is need to balance the interests of both the communities.



Dr. Soundararajan, DDE introducing the theme of the Workshop

Dr. Soundararajan, Associate Professor, Directorate of Distance Education, Management Wing, explained the theme and need for the workshop. In Introduction of theme he said in the present era of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization the consumer protection has become most important as with the technological advancements malpractices and unscrupulous practices against the consumers have increased many folds. There are Advertisements also where are misleading Advertisements. To protect the consumers there is a need to generate awareness among the masses. Even the educated people are not fully aware about their consumer rights and how to protect themselves. There is need for researchers to take up research in the areas. This will not only increase their knowledge but also lead to generation of material which will help in dissemination of information among the masses. Keeping this in mind this training programme has been organised which will have input from research methodology as well as consumer protection. This will provide an overview of the area and enable them to take up research in the area.



Prof. Dr. M. Ramanathan, VC, Annamalai University, inaugurated the workshop

On the occasion Prof. Dr. M. Ramanathan, Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University, inaugurated the workshop and addressed the participants. He said that the topic is of common importance for all of us as we all are consumers of one or the other service. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 is a social welfare legislation meant to give better protection to the consumers. Consumer Education and Awareness is one of the six consumers' rights enumerated under the

Act. However, whatever awareness is generated by the government reaches only the people who are already aware and the vulnerable section of the society who are unaware continue to be exploited. This gives rise to need for research. As only in case of failure of the present system there is need to do research in the area. These days every profession is considered as business and the purpose is to attract the consumer like in the case of medical profession. The question is even though there is law for consumer protection, whether we are able to get value for money? People have to pay the price for sub-standard products and services as they are not aware about the technicalities and get cheated. There are number of challenges which the consumers face today. There is need to bring balance between principles of management and principles of Consumer Protection. All this increases the need for research in the area.



Prof. Pranab Banerji, Project Director, Consultancy Project, delivering

Keynote Address

Prof. Pranab Banerji, Professor and Project Director, Consultancy Project, IIPA in his keynote Address said that the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India is undertaking a large number of measures for protection of consumers and as a part of it, it has established the Centre for Consumer Studies at IIPA and also given a Consultancy Project to IIPA. The objective of Consultancy Project is promoting involvement of universities, research institutions and colleges in consumer protection and promote research among the faculty members. The purpose is to involve as

many research and educational institutions on the consumer issues as possible. The generation of awareness is one aspect; the other aspect is that people should come out with various studies bringing out different aspects of consumerism.

He presented an overview of the Consultancy Project and the various activities conducted under the project. The participants were informed about the scheme in detail. He briefed the participants that the scheme is in two parts – one part is to give grants to the universities/ colleges and research institutions to conduct research in the area of consumer protection and consumer welfare. The other part deals with the capacity building activities among the researchers and to disseminate the message among the researchers that grant is available to people interested in the area. This and other activities under the part II of the consultancy are an effort to generate awareness among the underprivileged groups who are not aware about their rights and suffer in silence. This is the area where lacunae exist and we need to know what are the laws and policies for consumer protection.

Providing an overview of the programme he said that the training programme has been divided into two parts-one involving inputs on consumer protection and awareness and the other part on research methodology. Hence there are sessions on various issues of consumer protection as well as on qualitative and quantitative techniques in two part – first we conduct Capacity Building programme for the Researchers in which issue related to Research methodology and consumer protection are incorporated. The idea is to equip and encourage the participants to conduct the research in the area of consumer protection. Second part is for funding. The programme is just to give a practical approach to research methodology to young researchers which are familiar with research methodology. We also provide an overview of the scheme and who can apply for the research. The idea is to encourage faculty members to come out with short term research studies on consumer issues which are of one year duration. Consumer besides being a consumer, is a citizen, he is person belonging to world. Welfare of people as consumers will ultimately lead to welfare of citizenry and make the world a better place to live. There are number of topics on which research can be taken up like sustainable consumption, financial frauds etc. The idea is also to develop a critical mass of people working in the area who can interact on the issue in different forces.



Prof. Suresh Misra, IIPA addressing the participants

Prof. Suresh Misra, Coordinator, CCS and Co-Project Coordinator, Consultancy Projection his Special Address said that Consumer Protection Act, 1986 has been there for more than two decades but still even those who have the knowledge shy away from complaining. As we Indians by nature have the attitude to suffer in silence and always think that going to court means a lot of problem, expenditure and waste of time. Today even the food items of daily use are being infected with poison. The consumer can cut down on a lot of items and cannot leave the basic items like food. It is not an urban phenomenon but is also prevalent in rural areas. It is not the only duty nor possible for the government to control and stop such scrupulous activities. The manufacturers and traders should not forget that producers are also consumers. The citizens should be aware about these issues. Government is taking a lot of steps to curb the unfair trade practices and generate awareness. However, to make the consumer movement a success there is need for steps on part of all stakeholders. The business should also take appropriate measures for redressal of consumer grievance at the organizational level and also encourage self regulation. At present corporate social responsibility is only a lip service. The explorative and in-depth study of the topic is the catchment area of intellectuals. Here the researchers and students can definitely contribute a lot by taking up research in the area.

The programme was divided into two parts-one involving inputs on consumer protection and awareness and the other part on research methodology. Hence there were sessions on various issues of consumer protection as well as on qualitative and quantitative techniques. The sessions were: Introduction to Consumer Protection by Prof. Suresh Misra, IIPA; Fundamentals of Research Design by Dr. M. Syed Zafer, Annamalai University; Capital Market, Insurance & Consumer by Mr. V. Soundararajan; Research Methods: Qualitative by Prof. Pranab Banerji, IIPA; Banking and Consumer by Mr. Ramakrishnan; Consumer Education & Awareness Prof. Suresh Misra, IIPA; Medical Negligence and Consumer by Dr. Sapna Chadah, IIPA; Research Methods: Quantitative by Prof. Pranab Banerji, IIPA; Construction of Questionnaire by Dr. C. Samudhra Rajakumar; Consumerism & Unfair – Trade Practices by Mr. Nirmala Desikan, CONCERT; Computer Application (SPSS) by Dr. C. Madhavi; Hypothesis, Testing Processing &

Data Analysis by Prof. Pranab Banerji, IIPA; Consumer Protection Act by Dr. Sapna Chadah; IIPA Misleading Advertisement & Consumers by N. Sivasubramanian; Preparing a Project Proposal by Prof. Pranab Banerji, IIPA and Protecting Rural Consumers by Prof. Suresh Misra, IIPA. The session on Consumer Research Design by Prof. Pranab Banerji, Prof. Suresh Misra, Dr. Sapna Chadah, IIPA was devoted for Research in Consumer Affairs where the whole process of selection and evaluation of the projects was discussed in detail. Some suggestions as regards the topics in the area of consumer protection and welfare in which research can be taken up were also highlighted.



Dr. D. Selvaragu, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Annamalai University delivering the Presidential Address

Dr. D. Selvaragu, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Annamalai University in his Presidential Address during the Valedictory Session said that the capacity building of the researchers on consumer protection is the need of the hour. That is why it has been introduced in the syllabus of B.A., B.Com and now in the syllabus of MBA. In sciences you can get objectivity easily. However, that is not possible in social sciences. That requires that social scientists should do

the job properly and systematically. The techniques for basic, applied and action research are different. As students of social sciences you have to perceive these problems. Consumer protection is an emerging new area and provides a lot of opportunity to do research which need to be explored.

Dr. M. Rathinasabapathi, Registrar, Annamalai University in his Valedictory Address said that growing interdependence of world economy has laid emphasis on consumer protection and consumer welfare. Consumers are demanding value for money in the form of quality goods and better services. Technological developments have made a great impact on the quality, availability and safety of goods and



Dr. M. Rathinasabapathi, Registrar, Annamalai University delivering the Valedictory Address

services. But the consumers are still victims of unscrupulous and exploitative practices. In this context government has the duty to protect consumers through policy inputs and legislations. However, academicians also have an equal duty to contribute to the development of the field through research and also generate awareness on the issue. Good research requires common sense and planning project. Research decisions depend on your judgment. It involves collecting the information, analyzing it testing the hypothesis etc. Research can no doubt help the consumer movement and activists. Basically it will inform the consumers, business groups etc and provide policy inputs to the government.

On various issues for consumers to be confident information must be correct. If the consumers take notice of your research, they should be able to make better choice and better purchase. The descriptive and scientific research are two methods and selection of tools also depends on type of research being undertaken. Therefore, before starting the research do concentrate on aims and objectives of research.

Prof. Suresh Misra, Co-project Coordinator, Consultancy Project in his address thanked the registrar and the Department of Distance Education, Annamalai University for organizing the programme. He said that the research methodology has always remained a difficult subject. Our objective through this programme has been to make it very interesting and to introduce the consumer as a matter of research. We hope that you have found it to be useful. We have tried to provide an environment for you to take some meaningful research in the area which has some value for Department of Consumer Affairs as well.

Prof. Pranab Banerji, Project Coordinator, Consultancy Project said that the three day programme in research methodology is not sufficient. It is just an attempt to acquaint you all to a new and emerging topic which has a lot of potential for research. Knowledge has made a lot of change in the lives. The educational institution through their knowledge and research can makes difference. The efforts which are being put are not sufficient. There is need for all of us to make more efforts to make a mark globally.

Views/Opinions of the participants on different aspects of the Training Programme are analysed and presented below :(Total views of 22participants)

1. Please rate the structure and organization of the Course.

Very Well structured	Well structured	Somewhat un-structured	Very un-structured	NC
14	7	1	-	-

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useful is the training to you immediately in your job?

Very useful	Quite useful	Of limited use	Not at all useful	NC
17	4	1	-	-

3. How useful is the training likely to be in future jobs that you may handle?

Very useful	Quite useful	Of limited use	Not at all useful
17	4	1	-

4. How far have you been benefited from interaction with the fellow participants of the course?

Extremely	Considerably	Fairly	Not at all
9	13	-	-

5. H

ow far was the course material supplied relevant and related to the course content?

Extremely relevant	Considerably relevant	Fairly relevant	Not at all relevant
19	3	-	-

6. To what extent are you satisfied with the following?

	Satisfied fully	Satisfied to a large extent	Satisfied to a limited extent	Not satisfied at all	NC/NA
a. Reception	18	4	-	-	-
b. Residential accommodation	17	1	-	-	4
c. Food quality and service	21	1	-	-	-
d. Class room Facilities	20	2	-	-	-
e. Interaction with the Faculty	16	5	-	-	1
f. Recreation Facilities	15	2	1	-	4

7. Assessment of Training Faculty/sessions (22 Participants responded)

Sl. No.	Topic	Name of Speaker	Assessment				
			Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	NC
1.	Introduction to Consumer Protection	Suresh Misra	17	3	1	-	1
2.	Fundamentals of Research Design	M. Syed Zafer	13	4	2	2	1
3.	Capital Market, Insurance & Consumer	V. Soundararajan	12	5	4	-	1
4.	Research Methods: Qualitative, Interview, Questionnaire, Case Study	Pranab Banerji	17	3	-	-	2
5.	Banking and Consumer	Ramakrishnan	11	3	3\	1	4
6.	Consumer Education & Awareness	Suresh Misra	11	4	1	1	5
7.	Medical Negligence and Consumer	Sapna Chadah	8	3	2	2	7
8.	Research Methods: Quantitative	Pranab Banerji	16	3	-	-	3
9.	Construction of Questionnaire	C. Samudhra Rajakumar	15	4	-	1	2
10.	Consumerism & Unfair – Trade Practices	Nirmala Desikan	10	5	1	-	6
11.	Computer Application (SPSS)	C. Madhavi	9	6	1	1	5
12.	Hypothesis, Testing Processing & Data Analysis	Pranab Banerji	14	1	3	1	3
13.	Consumer Protection Act	Sapna Chadah	10	5	-	1	6
14.	Misleading Advertisement & Consumers	M.Sivasubramanian	13	4	1	2	2

15.	Preparing a Project Proposal	Pranab Banerji	14	3	1	1	3
16.	Protecting Rural Consumers	Suresh Misra	9	2	2	2	7
17.	Consumer Research Design	Pranab Banerji Suresh Misra Sapna Chadah	12	2	2	1	5

8. Which parts of the course did you find most helpful?

1.	Research Methods	6
2.	All	5
3.	Construction of Questionnaire	3
4.	Misleading Advertisements and Consumer	2
5.	Preparing Project Proposal	1
6.	Computer Applications	1
7.	Consumer Education and Awareness	1

9. Which parts of the course did you find least helpful?

1.	None	4
2.	Banking and Consumer	1
3.	Research Design	1
4.	Construction of Questionnaire	1
5.	Misleading Advertisements and Consumer	1
6.	Research Methods	1

10. Your overall impression of the course.

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	NC
15	7	-	-	-

11. Did the course give you any specific ideas about how you can improve your work?

Yes	No	NC
18	4	-

- Discussed various aspects of Consumer Protection which has imparted a lot of information and will help in project work.
- Informative and knowledgeable programme.
- Got an idea as how to prepare a research proposal and choose a research topic
- Will be able to create awareness among the students about consumer protection and consumer welfare
- It has laid down the basic concepts and principles to be adhered to in research.
- Has taught as how to choose an area for research and construct a questionnaire.
- Knew a lot about consumer protection and project preparation.
- Very useful course for doing research.
- Gave basic idea about research.
- Came to know about the practical applications of SPSS, how to prepare research design and methodology related to consumer protection.

12. Any other Comment / observations you wish to make about the course?

- Programme was very useful.
- Has really built our capacity in the area.

- Make more lively by adding practical experiences.

We would like to place on record the practice followed in the Indian Institute of Public Administration to give due consideration to the views/suggestions of the participants in regard to the course contents and design of the programme at the time of restructuring the training programme. The views/comments of the participants, therefore, will certainly be considered next time, while designing the programme.

The report would be incomplete, if we do not record our appreciation to the Faculty, Officers and staff of Directorate of Distance Education, Annamalai University for their help. However, Dr. M. Syed Zafar, Head, Management Wing, DDE, and Dr. M. Siva subramanian and Dr. K. Soundararajan, Programme Conveners deserve special mention for their support.

We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our thanks to Dr. Rakesh Hooja, Director, IIPA for his guidance and encouragement. The Secretary, Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, deserve special thanks for sponsoring the Centre for Consumer Studies and the Consultancy Project and reposing confidence and trust in the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.

(Suresh Misra)

(Pranab Banerji)

Course Coordinators