

Three Day Training Programme on Capacity Building for the Researchers on Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare

at

P. G. Department of Social Science, F. M. University, Balasore, Odisha

(April 26-28, 2012)

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 P.G. Department of Social Sciences, Fakir Mohan University, Odisha organized a **3 Day Training Programme on Capacity Building for Researchers in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare** from **April 26-28, 2012**. The programme was sponsored by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India. Thirty three participants from various universities and colleges in Odisha 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 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 on the dais during the Inaugural Session



Dr. Geetanjali Dash, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Social Sciences, F.M. University introducing the workshop

The programme began with Welcome Address by Dr. Geetanjali Dash, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Social Sciences, Fakir Mohan University and Programme Coordinator. She welcomed all the dignitaries and the participants to the programme. She said that it is a grand occasion on part of department. She thanked Vice Chancellor and IIPA for providing support for the programme. IIPA is having mission of making each consumer aware of his rights under the Consumer Protection Act and this programme is part of these activities

which aims to generate an interest among the teaching fraternity on the subject and to encourage them to take up research on it.



Dignitaries lighting the Lamp



Prof. K.B. Das, Vice Chancellor, F. M. University addressing the participants

In the Inaugural Session Prof. K.B. Das, Vice Chancellor, F. M. University said that in the era of globalization and free markets where the competition is not perfect, consumer protection has assumed greater importance. The competition is a myth and consumers are suffering. They are made to pay more for lower quality products. MNCs are becoming monopolistic and over last two decade competition is decreasing. The prices are increasing and quality is coming down. The aim of competition was to increase variety and decrease price. Consumer is suffering and he is made to pay

for all this. Everybody is benefitted except the consumer. Only 10% are able to purchase in the malls but 90% come out frustrated as they cannot pay. The quality of products is uncertain, the varieties are not many and the consumption is also effecting the environment. The increasing consumption is leading to wastage and depletion of resources. There is need for consumers to be made conscious. Researchers can play a role in this through their serious research in the area. The customer is citizen and his social, economic and emotional security is to be ensured. Markets presume that everything can be quantified which is wrong as many things are not quantifiable and has non-economic variables. There is need to make consumers aware and conscious of their rights. This is a workshop of different kind which aims at capacity building of researchers in the area of consumer protection. Researchers through their serious research must probe into some of these areas and educate the consumers. This will definitely go a long way in not only educating the consumers but also provide valuable policy inputs to the government.

Prof. Ashwini Kr. Ray, Former Professor, CPS, Jawaharlal Nehru University in his address said that major of concern today is how to provide better services to consumers. The basic problem country is that there is lack of initiative from public. The consumer movement is



Prof. Ashwini Kr. Ray, Former Professor, CPS, JNU delivering his Address

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triggered here by government initiatives and not by public upsurge. We go on bearing mediocre services unless it seriously affects us. There is need for educating the masses about their consumer rights and redressal mechanism. There are two things to be learnt from human rights movement - It was triggered by external conditions but once it came into being it became people's movement and this had its benefits. The CPA which was enacted in 1986 was triggered by UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection in 1985 which was based on US system. Here it is important for the success of the movement that people get associated with it. In this consumer awareness is important but all need to work for that.

Systems are corrupt and service delivery is also riddled with the problem of corruption and as a result all of us suffer. Question of efficiency of services has a limitation in this part of the world. It is thus important for all of us to be familiar with our rights and redressal mechanism. You go to market and find weights and measures are fake or are supplied with fake medicines or expired ones, then we must be aware as to what we can do as consumer. Largely the solutions have to emerge from the society itself. The right to information, right to education, right to food security, and right to environment are all useful supplements to consumer rights and deeply associated with them. Thus public awareness and consciousness needs to be generated in the society; but the trigger has to come from within society. The triggers provided by government with alien experiences are not going to be very successful. This will be possible only when those who are working on consumer protection area will provide more empirical inputs on how the services can be improved.



**Prof. Suresh Misra Co-Project
Coordinator, Consultancy Project, IIPA**
addressing the participants

Prof. Suresh Misra Co-Project Coordinator, Consultancy Project, IIPA said that when we started working in the area we also did not know what to teach. But slowly we realised that there are number of sectors which affect the consumers. In the present era where global markets are emerging consumer protection has become an issue of contemporary relevance. There is need to generate awareness

among masses about their rights and responsibilities and to take awareness to the grass root levels. For the same there is need to develop a pool of trainers who are interested and concerned about the problem. Through such programmes besides creating awareness we have also tried to encourage researchers to take up research on the consumer issues. The consumer protection is a multidisciplinary subject. It is not restricted to economics or commerce. It is an area which has importance for all the disciplines of social sciences. There is need for motivation to the researchers to take up research in the area.

The programme meets the twin objective of motivating researchers to take up research in this area and also to develop trainers who can take the awareness to the masses through involvement of students. There is a need to set research agenda, identify topics in the concerned field and develop a collaborative research where even the students can be associated and involved. However, he lamented that research methodology as a subject has been made very difficult in colleges and universities which discourages many to take up research. We will try to make the research easy here to encourage faculty to take up research. At the end we will also try that people take up research in consumer protection.



**Prof. Pranab Banerji, Project Coordinator,
Consultancy Project, IIPA providing an
overview of the Project**

Prof. Pranab Banerji, Project Coordinator, Consultancy Project, IIPA said that the problem with consumer protection is that it has not received the required attention which it should have got even after 25 years of the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act. The era of reduction and shrinkage of government began in 1990s. In this new phase there has been a lot of shift of power. This brought in involvement and investment from private sector and all sort of problems for the consumers. When these companies became big entities, there arose problems for consumers. The emergence of regulatory and organizational structure is there but still the consumers are facing problems. The affluence of a particular class of society leading to unsustainable pattern of consumption also needs attention. We Indians do not question many things and accept them as are there.

A lot of money has been spent on consumer awareness. As a second step to it there is now move to create pool of academicians who have expertise in the area and can generate good research on the issue. The basic objective of this course is to introduce to the researchers certain issues involved in consumer protection to help promote them to take up research. The basic problem in our country is that researchers follow trends and news. Some of the areas are becoming important because of the policy change and consumer protection is one such emerging area. As far as research is concerned, we all are doing some research in our day to day life. It is only a mental barrier which is there to take up research. Idea is to have a discussion, make it easier and practical. He also provided an overview of the consultancy project and informed the participants them that the project also has a grant for research and any teacher who is interested in the area can give a proposal for the grant.



A session in progress during the programme

The training programme was divided into two parts-one involving inputs on consumer protection and awareness and the other part on research methodology. There were sessions on various issues of consumer protection as well as on qualitative and quantitative techniques. There were sessions on Introduction to Consumer Protection, Fundamentals of Research Design, Consumer Protection Act, Sampling, Data Collection & Data Analysis, Research Methods Qualitative, Research Methods -Quantitative, Consumer Education & Awareness, Medical Negligence and Consumer, Hypothesis Testing, Insurance and Consumer, Computer Application (SPSS), Misleading Advertisements & Consumer, Preparing a Project Proposal & Report Writing, and Consumer Research Design.

During the Valedictory Session Prof. K.B. Das, Vice-Chancellor, F.M. University said that it is necessary to create an environment for such exchange of information. The training programme has been rigorously done. A good exchange of information has taken place between the speakers and the participants. The programme no doubt would have developed interest in you all to the subject and encouraged to take up research in it. He hoped that the participants would take consumer awareness to the grassroot level as well contribute to the evolution of a sound consumer policy through their research in the area.

Feedback from Participants

Dr. Saroj Kumar Jhana, Faculty Member, P.G. Department, Fakir Mohan University said that each and every session of the programme was meaningful and helpful and practically oriented. If possible such type of training programmes should be organised next year as well. If possible therein consumer behaviour may also be included. All the participants have gained from the speakers.

Shri Pramod Kumar Ray said that consumers' rights are a very important aspect of globalisation. The training has been very stimulating experience and such initiatives are necessary for creating awareness on consumer rights. Presently consumer rights research is a grey area of research and still remains an untouched area. It is this kind of ToT which will spread information about these issues and open new area in the research world for all of us. The population is getting educated about consumer issues both in urban and rural area, but still the consumers are getting cheated. In this scenario the research should be conducted in this area and the findings must be shared with the masses.

- Some of sessions were very interactive and interesting. Interactive sessions must be there maintain participants' interest.
- The programme has given a new area to discuss and research. The areas like financial frauds, insurance, junk food are the areas which need to be researched both in urban and rural area. The training has inspired us to take these new areas for research.
- Research methodology was presented in a very interesting manner. Computer application session should be for whole day as it is need of the hour.
- Training programme was well organised.

Prof. A. K. Ray, Former Professor, CPS, Jawaharlal Nehru University in his address said that the relationship between Research Institute and Policy should be of reflection and action. Main problem of social science research is that it is too much influenced by west. The need of both societies is different. In affluent societies people have limited needs and unlimited means and therefore, new needs are required to be created. So the whole emphasis in affluent society is on creation of new needs. Therefore, new needs are created which are unethical. In America the consumer movement emerged from society and was adopted by policy makers and thus emerged UN guidelines. But in our society still there is no demand from society as we still believes in personal relationship and it idea of contract has not seeped in. The more you are able to keep your research methodology in place and adopt proper statistical methods, it will definitely help in your research. The discussions in the programme have been enormous and intense.

Prof. Pranab Banerji, Project Coordinator, Consultancy Project, IIPA said that we have organised these courses in different states. Many states were proactive but many states were difficult to reach; Odisha was one of such states. It is because of the initiatives of the Vice – Chancellor and Dr. Geetanjali Dash, that we have been able to organise it here. The speakers for different areas were excellent and because of that interest of the participants was maintained. Participants were also motivated and level of participation was good. The idea was to encourage people to take up research in the area and also to impress upon the need of research methods. If we have to be anywhere near to advanced countries our working force should improve. It is not only physical capital but human development which plays an important role in the overall growth. Even Rabindra Nath Tagore brought out importance of research and studies in the progress of society. This training programme is not the end but a beginning of a new relationship.

Prof. Suresh Misra Co-Project Coordinator, Consultancy Project, IIPA said that Centre for Consumer Studies started 5 years back in 2007 and since then we have been searching for partnership in Odisha. It was only last year we were able to establish partnership with the university and since then we are spreading our activities in Odisha. Over these five years through various activities like seminars, conferences, workshops in consumer protection and consumer welfare, we have been able to integrate a lot of institutions, universities, colleges and teachers in the movement. We are ready to help enhance your interest in the area if you are interested to carry research, documentation or publication in the area. He thanked all the participants for their involvement and Dr. Geetanjali Dash and Vice-Chancellor for their help and support in organising the programme. He said both the programmes we conducted in Fakir Mohan University were very well organised.

Views/Opinions of the participants on different aspects of the Training Programme are analysed and presented below:

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

Very Well structured	Well structured	Somewhat un-structured	Very un-structured	NC
18	13	1	-	-

2. How useful is the training to you immediately in your job?

Very useful	Quite useful	Of limited use	Not at all useful	NC
19	12	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	NC
21	9	2	-	-

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

Extremely	Considerably	Fairly	Not at all	NC
11	14	6	-	1

5. How far was the course material supplied relevant and related to the course content?

Extremely relevant	Considerably relevant	Fairly relevant	Not at all relevant	NC

17	9	4	-	2
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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	17	14	-	-	1
b. Residential accommodation	12	7	2	1	10
c. Food quality and service	10	11	9	1	1
d. Class room Facilities	18	9	1	-	4
e. Interaction with the Faculty	17	11	3	-	1
f. Recreation Facilities	10	9	-	-	13

7. Assessment of Training Faculty/sessions (32 Participants responded)

Sl. No.	Topic	Name of Speaker	Assessment				
			Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	NC
1.	Introduction to Consumer Protection	Suresh Misra	11	19	1	-	-
2.	Fundamentals of Research Design	S. S. Acharya	7	12	7	5	-
3.	Consumer Protection Act	Sapna Chadah	7	15	7	1	1
4.	Sampling, Data Collection & Data Analysis	K. B. Das	19	11	1	-	-
5.	Research Methods Qualitative	Pranab Banerji	21	8	1	-	1
6.	Research Methods Quantitative	Pranab Banerji	19	10	1	-	1
7.	Consumer Education & Awareness	Suresh Misra	15	14	-	-	2
8.	Medical Negligence and Consumer	Sapna Chadah	8	14	7	1	1
9.	Hypothesis Testing	B. M. Otta	16	13	2	-	-
10.	Insurance and Consumer	D. K. Patra	3	10	10	8	-
11.	Computer Application (SPSS)	Nihar Ranjan Routary	8	15	4	1	3
12.	Misleading Advertisements & Consumer	Tanmay De	17	12	2	-	-
13.	Preparing a Project Proposal & Report Writing	Pranab Banerji	17	11	-	-	3
14.	Consumer Research Design	Pranab Banerji Suresh Misra Sapna Chadah	14	11	-	-	6

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

1.	Research Methods	12
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2.	Hypothesis Testing	10
3.	Consumer Protection Act	10
4.	Computer Applications (SPSS)	8
5.	Consumer Education and Awareness	7
6.	Sampling and Data Collection	5
7.	Fundamentals of Research Design	5
8.	Insurance and Consumer	5
9.	Medical Negligence and Consumer	4
10.	Preparing Project Proposal & Report Writing	3
11.	Misleading Advertisements and Consumer	2
12.	All	2
13.	Introduction to Consumer Protection	1

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

1.	None	14
2.	Insurance and Consumer	5
3.	Fundamentals of Research Design	2
4.	Computer Applications	1
5.	Medical Negligence and Consumer	1
6.	Hypothesis Testing	1
7.	Consumer Education and Awareness	1
8.	Sampling and Data Collection	1

10 Your overall impression of the course.

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	NC
14	12	5	-	1

11 Did

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

Yes	No	NC
31	-	1

- It provided a deep insight to do research in the area of consumer protection.
- It will also lead to improvement in teaching and students will be benefitted.
- The training will help in research work.
- The deliberations during the course keep us abreast of knowledge and information on Consumer Protection Act which will improve our day to day lifestyle and also help us in imparting knowledge to others.

- This course has given specific ideas and will definitely improve my working.
- It helped to be conceptually clear while doing research work.
- The programme will be very useful for our research work in future.
- As consumer awareness is the need of the hour in our society; such programmes are very useful.
- It will help me in making the students and public aware about their consumer rights.
- The course will help me protect myself and others while purchasing the products.
- It will help in protecting the interest of the consumers in the area.
- Will be beneficial for the faculty members in carrying out specific project work
- It will help in day to day activity.
- Became aware about the establishment of consumer clubs in educational institutions wherein each one can teach a number of young consumer s and make them aware about their rights.

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

- The training should be of longer duration.
- The practical session on computer application (SPSS) should be more.
- The workshops and programmes should be organized among rural people to make them aware about the Act.
- The university to involve all the affiliated colleges in such programmes of great utility.
- Very Satisfactory programme.
- These types of training programmes are helpful in creating awareness in the society.
- More experts in the area should be invited for interaction.
- The workshops should also be organized at college level as it will develop awareness among the students and family members especially in rural areas.
- The duration of the programme should be increased.
- The programme was very relevant and interesting.
- Local NGOs and other forums should also be involved.
- The programme will be more effective if one ay field survey work for the participants is also incorporated.
- More such workshops be organized.

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 P. G. Department of Social Sciences, F. M. University, Balasore, Odisha for their help. However, Dr. Geetanjali Dash, Associate Professor & Head, P.G. Department of Social Sciences, F.M. University deserve special mention for his 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)

Programme Directors