

**Three Days Training Programme on Capacity Building
Researchers in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare
at CCS University, Meerut**

(September 23-25, 2010)

The Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi under the Scheme on **“Promoting Involvement of Research Institutions, Universities and Colleges in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare”** in collaboration with Department of Political Science, Chaudhary Charan Singh University organized a **Three Day Training Programme on “Capacity Development for Researchers in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare” from September 23-25, 2010**. The programme was sponsored by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India. 53 participants from various universities and colleges in Uttar Pradesh 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 up research in various related areas of consumer protection where there exists a gap.



Participants of Three days Training Programme on Capacity Building Researchers in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare. CCS University. Meerut

On the occasion the Welcome Speech delivered by Prof. S.K. Sharma, CCS University, Meerut. He welcomed all the dignitaries and participants to the programme. He highlighted the importance Consumer protection and welfare in the globalised markets. He said that with the privatization and liberalization of the markets, consumer affairs has become a important area of social science research study. In today's world consumer protection is an inalienable right in any country. With economic growth and globalization in India consumer protection needs to be given preference. We all are consumers of goods and services and need to know about the consumer rights and how to protect them. But the people who really need to be educated and informed about the issue are the vulnerable and marginalized sections of the society which include the illiterate, poor, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, and women. With this objective there is need to motivate the researchers to take up the subject seriously and work in the area.



**Prof. S.K. Sharma, CCS University
Delivering the Welcome Speech**

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Presenting the theme Prof. Suresh Misra, on behalf of IIPA extended his warm welcome to all the guests and participants of programme. He said that the Centre for Consumer Studies is a new Centre at IIPA sponsored by DCA. It is a unique type of Centre to protect and promote the rights of consumers with special emphasis on the rural consumers. The broad activities of the centre include training, research, advocacy, consultancy and networking with other institutions and organisations.



Prof. Suresh Misra, IIPA presenting the theme

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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. 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.

This Consultancy Project on Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare is basically meant to bring the consumer into the main stream. The studies conducted show that not much work has been done on consumer issues. It is said and believed that the rural consumers' are the most exploited as they are not aware of their rights and how to protect themselves. But that is not so, the urban and literate class is exploited to the same extent as the rural folk. We are exploited daily through all sort of unfair and unscrupulous practices. There are misleading ads which deceive the consumers with all sort of wrong information. We need to educate and make aware the consumers about all these issues. It is said consumer is king. But he is a king without an army to protect him. There are departments of Consumer Affairs with policies to protect the consumers. But people are not much aware about these which leads to their exploitation and grievances. Teachers are important as they can educate students and take the awareness to grassroots levels. In this the consumer clubs at schools and colleges can also play an important role.

Prof Pranab Banerji, Project Director, Consultancy Project, IIPA presented an overview of the Consultancy Project on “Promoting Involvement of Research Institutions, Universities and Colleges in Consumer Protection and Consumer Welfare” and the various activities conducted under the project. He that the basic objective of the Project is to generate awareness in



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Prof. Banerji, IIPA presenting the overview of Consultancy Project

Universities/colleges through teachers and researchers. Another important objective is to encourage research in the area. To fulfil the second objective we have the provision of three capacity building programme each year for the University and College teachers with the purpose to have interaction on consumer related issues and motivate them to take up research in the area. This is to generate interest among the faculty members who can then give their proposal if they are interested and if the proposal gets accepted then the person gets grant for a year's 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 researches and to disseminate the message among the researchers that grant is available to people interested in the area. There are two parts of the capacity building programme – one on consumer studies/ affairs and second on research methodology. 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.

Dr. Arun Vashistha, President, Samyukta Vyapar Mandal, Meerut delivered the special address on the occasion. He said that the main issue for discussion today is protection of consumers. The trader, manufacturer and service providers are considered the main cause for the exploitation of consumers are target of all criticism. Even traders manufacturers are consumers of all those



Dr. Arun Vashistha delivering the special address

items which they are not producing / trading and are in the same position as any other consumer. Thus it is necessary that all of us as consumers should be aware of our rights; it is the need of the hour. Consumers are not alert about the quality, quantity and other aspects of

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the product they are purchasing and thus they are being cheated. On having grievance they do not have any idea where to lodge complaint in case of defect/deficiency and how to get redressal. They are unaware of simple testing techniques for checking adulteration of food items. To some extent for the exploitation even the consumers are also to blame. They usually get attracted towards cheap products. There is thus need to educate the consumers about these small things which will go a long way in protecting them; consumers will definitely be benefited. Thus there is need to fill in the lacunae in knowledge and information as far as the consumer issues are concerned. Teachers and researchers have an important role to play in this. The research conducted in consumer related topics will no doubt be helpful to all of us. It will not only sensitise the consumers but also be an eye opener for the business.

The Guest of Honour Prof. K.K. Mishra, BHU, Varanasi said that consumer is king of the market, but it is pity that this king is without power. Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation has given rise to a number of movements and consumer movement is one of them. Consumer protection is not possible only through legislation, there is need to make consumers aware. Consumer is not king but slave of markets. Today consumer is being exploited whether it is drug or wine; all the products supplied are spurious and fake. There is adulteration in products. Manu Smritii even talked about giving death sentence for adulteration. Both rural and urban consumers are being misled equally. Even the advertisements are misleading the consumers.

Whole ideology of markets is to earn more and more profit leading to more exploitation of consumers. The entire purchasing today is based on philosophy of 'use and throw' which is alien to Indian ideology. We in India always believed in permanent relations. It is the western culture which is ruining our culture. The behaviour of traders is putting India to shame. To provide cheap and poor quality things to earn more and more profit has become the basis of business. We need to study consumerism in Indian conditions and that should form basis of the legislation. In the economy driven society even the government and governance is for the traders and in the process the consumers are being ignored. The benefit and well being of society is not the objective of the business today. Study of consumer as a citizen will provide solutions accordingly.

Prof. Pushpesh Pant, Dean, Social Sciences, JNU, New Delhi inaugurated the programme. In his Inaugural Address he said neither consumer nor a common man is a king. all are consumers who are neither aware of our rights nor responsibilities. To certain extent our irresponsible behaviour is cause for our sorrows. We all have become used to consuming drugs without prescription. We ignore the rules and regulations. The Consumer is mainly concerned about whether he is getting worth for his money.



Prof. Pushpesh Pant, JNU delivering the Inaugural Address

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On the other hand the trader / manufacturer do not do illegal things merely to earn money. But there are other pressures also like he has to pay for illegal gratification to officials. All professionals whether it is teachers, doctor, or advocate work under such forces. Medical professionals take high fees but hardly have time for patients. The Consumer Protection Act does not only give protection against defective goods but also against deficiency in services. If the car is stolen from the parking of the hotel then it is deficiency in service. However the problem is that most of the consumers are unaware of laws and regulations for their protection. Our Sanskriti provides the parameters to judge our actions in the society. These parameters have been encoded in the laws.

In the world of trade and advertisements there are two categories of goods: - FMCG and consumer durables. Whenever we purchase these commodities, we need to take care of certain aspects. We do need to have knowledge about guarantee/ warrantee and how to protect our self in case of any defect in the item. We need to know what our rights as consumers are. The main lacuna of Consumer Protection Act is that it provides protection only against paid goods and services. However, the protection should not be only against paid goods and services but it should also be extended to free goods. Then only the Act will be helpful to the consumers of vulnerable sections of the society in the real sense.

The work done by IIPA is commendable. But it should not be limited to the university research. The concept is required to be taken to the grass root levels to the common consumers. There is need for booklets which give information about general things to consumers.

Prof. N.K. Taneja, officiating Vice-Chancellor, CCS University in his Presidential Remarks said that All of us are consumers and consumer protection and welfare is minimum in India. That's why the Department has decided organise workshop in this regard. Even manufacturer is also a consumer at certain level. We have to see whether our action is going to negatively affect others, if yes then we not working upto the mark. This principle



Prof. N.K. Taneja, officiating VC, CCS are delivering Presidential Remarks

should also be applicable in case of traders and manufacturers. Main reasons for consumer exploitation in India are absence of proper governance and absence of proper justice system. This issue of consumer protection is interdisciplinary and we all should deliberate together on this issue to come out with some initiatives for the welfare of consumers. In developed countries, the consumer protection mechanism is better developed. In developed countries there is no concept of MRP which is the main reason of consumer exploitation in the developing countries like India. There is need for competitive forces in market to make them more consumer friendly. Where market forces function to maximum extent the chances of exploitation, spurious goods and adulteration are minimum. The loss of morality and ethics in the society are also reasons for exploitation of consumers.

After the formal inaugural session the Programme Directors welcomed the participants and briefed them about the programme objectives, contents and the expectations from each participant. A brief presentation was made regarding the objectives and activities under the consultancy project sponsored by DCA. The participants while introducing themselves provided information about their educational qualification, work experience and the areas in which they are presently working.

The programme was divided into a number of thematic sessions on Consumer Protection and Research Methodology to enable researchers to take up research in the area of consumer protection and consumer welfare. There were two sessions on Introduction to Consumer Affairs and Protection and Consumer Protection and Awareness by Prof. Suresh Misra, IIPA, New Delhi, Consumer Protection Act by Dr. Sapna Chadah, Protecting Rural Consumer by Prof. J.K. Pundir, Scientific Research – An Introduction by Prof. Asmer Beg, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Research Design by Prof. S.P.M. Tripathi, Head Political Science, DDU Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, Qualitative Methods in Research by Prof. Madhurendra Kumar, Dept. of Political Science, Kumaun University, Nainital, Quantitative Methods in Research was taken by Prof. Pranab Banerji, IIPA, New Delhi and Qualitative Methods in Research by Prof. S.K. Chaturvedi, Former Pro-VC, CCS University, Meerut. A session was also devoted to Research in Consumer Affairs wherein Prof. Pranab Banerji and Prof. Suresh Misra, IIPA, New Delhi explained the whole process of selection and evaluation of the projects in detail. Some suggestions as regards the topics in the area of consumer protection and welfare in which research can be undertaken were also highlighted.



Prof. S. P. Verma, IIPA delivering the Valedictory Address

Prof. S. P. Verma, Former Professor and Member, Executive Council, IIPA delivered the Valedictory Address. Prof Verma appreciated the efforts of IIPA and the University in developing researchers in the area of Consumer Welfare which is very relevant and unexplored area as far as research is concerned. He gave an account of consumer protection efforts in the West, particularly in the USA. He said in the developed countries consumers are educated and empowered as a result the quality of service delivery are of high order. He narrated instances from his personal experiences to highlight the need to empower consumers.

He was of the view that there is tremendous scope research in this area as after globalisation the market economy has given rise to a lot of exploitation. Be it advertising, service delivery or quality of products the consumers are at the receiving end. He called upon the

researchers to enhance their knowledge and take up new areas of research which could be useful in policy formulation. He thanked the organisers for inviting him to deliver the Valedictory Address.

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
32	11	1	-

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

Very useful	Quite useful	Of limited use	Not at all useful
26	15	3	-

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
27	14	3	-

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

Extremely	Considerably	Fairly	Not at all
29	10	5	-

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
22	14	3	2	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	33	8	-	-	3
b. Residential accommodation	14	2	-	-	28
c. Food quality and service	37	5	1	-	1
d. Class room Facilities	36	6	-	-	2
e. Interaction with the Faculty	37	3	-	-	4
f. Recreation Facilities	14	4	-	-	24

7. Assessment of Training Faculty/sessions (44 Participants responded)

Sl. No.	Topic	Name of Speaker	Assessment				
			Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	NC
1.	Introduction to Consumer Affairs and Protection	Suresh Misra	34	2	-	-	8
2.	Consumer Protection Act	Sapna Chadah	22	10	2	-	10
3.	Protecting Rural Consumer	JK Pundir	22	3	7	3	9
4.	Consumer Education and Awareness	Suresh Misra	34	1	-	-	9
5.	Scientific Research -An Introduction	Nidhi Sharma	25	5	4	1	9
6.	Research Design	Kanchan Singh	11	12	8	6	7
7.	Qualitative Methods in Research	Madhurendra Kumar	19	9	4	4	8
8.	Quantitative Methods in Research	Pranab Banerji	31	2	3	-	8
9.	Qualitative Methods in Research	SK Chaturvedi	32	6	-	-	6
10.	Research in Consumer Affairs	Suresh Misra Pranab Banerji	34	3	-	-	7

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

1.	Research Methodology	14
2.	Consumer Protection Act	9
3.	All	7
4.	Consumer Education and Awareness	6
5.	Research Design	6
6.	Introduction to Consumer Protection	5
7.	Sampling and Questionnaire	4

8.	Protecting Rural Consumers	3
9.	Scientific Research	2
10.	Information on Research projects	1

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

1.	None	22
2.	Research Design	4
3.	Research Methodology	1
4.	Consumer Education and Awareness	1
5.	Qualitative Research Methodology	1

10. Your overall impression of the course

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	NC
31	12	-	-	1

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

Yes	No	NC
34	8	2

- Will be able to apply appropriate design and techniques in future.

- Help in society's development besides conducting research in the field.
- Gained knowledge on consumer affairs.
- Information on research was very important and will apply in future.
- Information on rural consumers' problems was useful.
- We can now impart knowledge on consumer protection to our students and society.
- Received new information on consumer affairs.
- Acquired information as how to conduct research in rigorous, professional and scientific manner without compromising technical matters.
- Very useful for college/ universities in conducting research in consumer protection and welfare.
- Learnt how to conduct research properly and manage it.
- Gained knowledge on consumer protection and laws which made more aware.
- Made us more conscious purchasers.
- Knew about the consumer rights and how to protect ourselves.
- Got the idea to be choosy and focussed to get effective results.
- Gained new field and aspect on research.
- Opened new doors for research in social sciences and provided a new field for research for the scholars.

12. Any other Comments/ Observations you wish to make about the Course.

- ⌘ Resource person should be specific on topic and present in a specific manner.
- ⌘ The workshop will advance the cause of consumer protection.
- ⌘ More and more such type of programmes be conducted.
- ⌘ Very informative and interactive workshop.
- ⌘ Course was quite useful.
- ⌘ Gave new ideas about the research problems.
- ⌘ Course should be done twice a year.
- ⌘ Course should be of week's duration.
- ⌘ Course is immensely helpful.
- ⌘ Knowing more about research design will help in going deep into the subject.
- ⌘ More resource persons be involved.
- ⌘ Fully satisfied with the programme.

- ⌘ Extremely relevant course as it provided information regarding consumers' right and how to protect oneself as consumer.

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 Department of Political Science, CCS University, Meerut for their help in organising the Training Programme. However, Prof. S. K. Sharma and his colleagues 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, encouragement and pro-active interest. 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