



NATIONAL CONSUMER CONVENTION ON "CHALLENGES FACING INDIAN CONSUMERS"

Consumer Coordination Council, New Delhi conducted a National Consumer Convention with the support of Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India on 10th October, 2014 at New Delhi. The topic for the convention was "Challenges facing Indian Consumers – Suggestions on a National Consumer Policy". CONCERT attended the meeting as a member.

Shri Gurucharan IAS, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and Shri. Manoj Parida IAS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs also attended the National Consumer Convention.

Different sessions were held on the following topics:

1. Corporate / Brand views on National Consumer Policy – E-Bay India, Honda & CREDAI gave their views

Mr. M. Somasundaram, Liaison officer On behalf of Shri R. Desikan, Chairman Emeritus).

Views of CONCERT Trust / Consumers Association of India about National Consumer Policy and Amendments to Consumer Protection Act were expressed in length. During 2005 "National Policy for Consumer Empowerment" was drafted by a committee headed by Sri. S. Ramakrishnan, IAS Principal Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu, Cooperation, Food & Consumer Protection Department. This was drafted by taking into account earlier work done by CONCERT Trust & Consumers Association of India. Sri. R. Desikan, Chairman Emeritus gave valuable suggestions to this draft and if these suggestions were considered automatic consumer empowerment, will be achieved.



Hon'ble Minister Shri. Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, inaugurated the National Convention. He stressed the need for National Consumer Policy and amendments to the Consumer Protection Act.

2. Views of Quality Control Agencies on National Consumer Policy – BIS & QCI delivered their opinions

3. Views of prominent Consumer organisations on challenges facing Indian Consumers –

Ms. Dato Indrani Thuraisingam, Head, Consumers International for Asia Pacific & the Middle East, Malaysia & Shri Keshav Desai Raju, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, addressed the gathering

- CUTS – (By Mr. George Cherian)
- VOICE – (By Mr. Ashim Sanyal)
- MGP – (By Mr. Shirish Deshpande)
- CONCERT Trust / Consumers Association of India – (By

Shri. Chandramouli, Chairperson FSSAI gave the valedictory address. He spoke on the link between FSSAI & Ministry of Consumer Affairs citing different incidents like CANOLA oil, Chocolates imported from other countries etc.

CAI NOMINATED TO THE SPECIAL TASK FORCE CONSTITUTED BY FSSAI.

This committee comprises several eminent scientists in the field of food safety and its main objective is to look into product approvals to ensure safe food for consumers.

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REVISION OF ELECTRICITY BOARD TARIFF

CAI is a member of the TEGI (Tamil Nadu Electricity Generation Initiative) formed by CAG, a consumer organisation.

As a part of the combined appeal against the proposed Tariff revision by TANGEDCO, TEGI has drafted a proposal. Mr.M.R.Krishnan, our Deputy Director, CONCERT Trust attended the meeting to finalize the draft.

The draft opposes the Tariff on the following counts.

1. TNERC itself has prepared the ARR.
2. There is no mention of penalty for TANGEDCO for our preparation of ARR.
3. The transmission of TANGEDCO, compensation to consumers for poor performance have not been considered.

CAI had suggested that the tariff revision for consumers of lesser units (up to 200) can be in the range of 30 to 40%. while for higher consumption it must be in the 10 – 15% range.

It was also suggested to work out the power needed for agriculturists for a 12 hr supply for which only, subsidy should be paid.



CAI had also suggested that free electricity for huts should be given a second thought, since in addition to “the Bulb”, TV’s, Mixers, Grinders, Laptops are provided free to this economic group, which consume a lot of power.

CAI NOMINATED TO THE TASK FORCE FORMED BY MOCA

Our Chairman Emeritus Shri.R.Desikan has been nominated to the special Task Force formed for implementation of the projects related to six ministries functioning under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs at New Delhi.

The departments are –

1. Housing.
2. Transport.
3. Finance.
4. Agriculture.
5. Public distribution.
6. Internet & Broadcasting.

JAGO GRAHAK JAGO – TALENT COMPETITION FOR YOUNG CONSUMERS

Consumers Association of India in association with Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of New Delhi proposes to conduct Elocution Contest, Drawing Contest, and Essay writing contest among 8th, 9th, and 11th standard students in 8 districts viz Madurai, Thirunelveli, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Erode, Coimbatore, Kanchipuram, and Thiruvallur. Prime Ministers theme of Swachh Bharat is also included.

The idea behind this contest is to promote consumer awareness. Such contest is proposed to be held in the above 8 districts and are scheduled to start by end of October 2014, and go for a few months.

A preliminary meeting was conducted at Shivasundar Villa, Injambakkam, Chennai on 15th October 2014. Shri.R.Desikan, Chairman Emeritus, Smt.Nirmala Desikan, Chairperson and Managing Trustee, Consumers Association of India spoke about the contest and explained how to take forward this competition successfully. Smt.Kalyani Rajaraman, Project Director, Shri.G.Santhanarajan, Director CONCERT Trust and Mr.M.R.Krishnan, Deputy Director, CONCERT Trust, gave valuable suggestions to the coordinators of the project from the above 8 Districts.

TALK SHOW AT “SATHYAM TV” ON SCAMS IN MILK SUPPLIED BY AMUL

Mr.M.R.Krishnan, Deputy Director, CONCERT Trust, a sister concern of CAI, participated in a talk show at “Sathyam TV” on 14th Oct, 2014. The subject matter for discussion was adulteration in milk supplied by AMUL. The other participants were Dr. Kanthamai, Social Activist and Mr.Ponnusamy On behalf of CONCERT, the following points were put forth.

1. Strict quality check is done by institutions like AAVIN and such isolated incidents should not be given importance.
2. Each product has a batch number and this is to facilitate tracing the production details, etc., so that remedial action can be taken.



3. The recall procedures adopted in UK/USA were explained and the views about the proposed recall of FSSAI, were explained.
4. Views were conveyed about the possible adulteration in milk and about the Annam Spot Test Kit with which these can be checked by householders.

The show was telecast between 7.00p.m. to 8.00p.m. on the same day.

TALK SHOW AT “THANTHI TV” ON THE TOPIC “DISCOUNT SALE”

Mr.M.R.Krishnan, our Deputy Director CONCERT Trust, attended an interview at “Thanthi TV” on 15th October, 2014. The topic for discussion was “discount sale”.

On behalf of Consumers Association of India, the following points were discussed.



1. People by nature have a tendency to buy things at bargain prices. This is utilized by the traders to offer discounts.
2. Discounts are announced at the time of clearance sale for giving incentives to motivate distributors and to encourage mis buying.
3. Sale with excess discounts results in excess turnover and this in turn benefits the seller.
4. Buyers should beware of defective goods which might be pushed into the sale network.
5. The concept of MRP & normal prices were explained with reference to the Legal Metrology rules etc.
6. The concept of consumerism and its ill effects were also explained.

Why wait for the world to change when you can change it yourself?

Empower yourself as a Consumer

- become aware of your responsibilities & rights as a consumer, to ensure you will never again be taken for a ride.
- have direct access to a committed group of experts who will make sure all your consumer related problems will be rightly and forcefully addressed.
- get information to make the right choices when buying products and services.
- become a part of the consumer movement to represent citizen consumers to ensure that their voice is heard.

Tell us your story

Have you got a story which you would like to have featured in CAI's newsletter? Share your story with us.

*Send to:
info@caiindia.org*

Volunteers Wanted

We're always on the hunt for confident and fun loving people to help us with our stories. We often use volunteers to test consumer products & services. If you are interested contact:

info@caiindia@org

How can we help?

What is the additional information you would like to see in the Newsletter?

- Consumer Complaints
- Consumer Durables
- Consumer Law
- Food Safety
- Real Estate
- Services

Write to us at info@caiindia.org .We will try & help you.

Visit our Website: www.caiindia.org

HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR MOBILE USERS

Scientists can't seem to make up their mind about cell phones. Are they causing radiation? Yes. Is it harmful to us? They are not sure. However, putting all their reports together, a pattern of tips and precautions becomes clear.

The most important thing you need to know right away, is that the phone is sometimes transmitting a stronger (and as such more hazardous) signal, while at other times it will transmit very weakly or not at all. It is a good idea to know when that happens and when not to avoid causing possible harm to yourself. Parents take heed, as children are the most susceptible to damage by radiation in their tender years of growth.

Here are some important tips to minimize exposure:

- **Keep some distance** – Hold the cell phone away from your body to the extent possible.
- **Use a Headset** – (wired or Bluetooth) to keep the handset away from your head.
- **Do not press the phone handset against your head** - Radio frequency (RF) energy is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the source – being very close increases energy absorption much more.
- Limit the length of mobile calls.
- **Use text (SMS)** as compared to voice wherever possible.
- Put the cell phone on speaker mode.
- **Use your phone where reception is good** – If the radio signal is weak, a mobile phone will increase its transmission power. Find a strong signal and avoid movement.
- Metal and water are good conductors of radio waves, so avoid using a mobile phone while wearing metal-framed glasses or having wet hair.
- **Let the call connect before putting the handset on your ear or start speaking and listening** – A mobile phone first makes the communication at higher power and then reduces power to an adequate level. More power is radiated during call connecting time.
- If you have a choice, use a landline (wired phone), not a mobile phone.
- When your phone is ON, don't carry it in your chest/breast/or pant pocket. As it may harm your fertility or your heart. When a mobile phone is ON, it automatically transmits at high power every one or two minutes to check (poll) the network.
- Reduce mobile phone use by children as a younger person is likely have a longer lifetime exposure to radiation from cell phones.

THE WORLD'S HEALTHIEST FOOD - AVOCADO

Proteins, fatty acids, vitamins and minerals, all these are contained in one fruit – **Avocado**. Eating avocados is just like having a full meal from different types of food, and this is just one of the many benefits of Avocados.

Besides the fact that the Avocado has amazing health benefits it is also very nutritious food. Avocado is rich in protein (4.02 grams, compared to Apple which has 0.47 grams), fiber (13.5 grams) and also is full of antioxidants.

Avocados contain a lot of potassium and along with intake of sodium through salt protect arteries against damage. The salt that we consume in large quantities is a risk for the heart and for the cardiovascular system, but with eating avocados we reduce that risk.

Folic acid in just one avocado is a 23% of our daily needs and plays a major role in protecting the heart. Folic acid is very important in pregnancy because it prevents the baby to get any anomalies.

Another strong argument that will make you to eat avocados is fatty acids. The fatty acids that are contained in avocados are the same like those in olive oil, and are the healthiest fatty acids known to science that prevent breast cancer and heart diseases. If your cholesterol is a problem, avocado is the answer.

Consumption of avocados is also beneficial to the eyes because avocados contain lutein (one of many natural pigments). This substance prevents cataracts and muscular degeneration.

Source: www.healthyfoodhouse.com

Avocados for weight loss:

The health benefits of avocados are well known, but just few people know that avocados can actually help with weight loss. Although avocado is "fat" fruit, it is useful in weight loss.

Monounsaturated fats which are also present in avocados act on the way that keep you full and satisfied and reduces the temptation of eating chocolates and sweets. It is very important to know that 125 grams of avocado contains 200 calories more than other fruits and vegetables, but less than French fries, cookies and other sweets.



CONSUMER CASES SOLVED BY CAI

COMPLAINT AGAINST EBAY ONLINE SHOPPING

Complaint:

I purchased a Casio watch from eBay. It was not working properly, it stops after 15 minutes and sometimes it stops after 2 hours. This watch is a duplicate (I also got it confirmed by local Casio dealer that it is not original) and in not working condition. The seller has to sell a genuine Casio watch as described on eBay product page. This cheating is very serious for us. I am totally not satisfied with faulty (not working) and duplicate watch, so please do needful to get refund of my money from the seller. I don't want replacement of the watch from this seller. I have launched refund application on eBay.in

- Mr. Piyush Pathak



Solution:

After CAI's mediation with Micromax Informatics Ltd., the complainant received the money back

Mr. Piyush Pathak's Testimonial:

At last due to CAI's continuous effort I got the refund of the money from eBay. I thank CAI for solving my complaint.

COMPLAINT AGAINST YEPME ONLINE

Complaint:

I placed an order of Rs.323 on YepMe.com for shoe on 30th June, 2014. I paid through HDFC net banking, payment was successfully debited from my account. Next day on 1st July, I got mail from YepMe stating that my order is rejected and in that mail it has a footer saying that if amount is debited from your account it will be refunded within seven business days. To confirm I called YepMe.com and they said it would take 10 days to process the refund. I waited for two weeks and again called them back; customer personnel asked me to send bank statement. I mailed the bank statement to them and again no response from them. Again I called them back after 10 days at that time they said I will be getting my money refunded within 1st Aug, 2014. but I didn't receive any money. I called them back on 25th Aug, and escalated to the supervisor Mr.Sandeep, he said that there is some problem with the payment gateway. I need my money back. By purchasing I lost Rs.323 and by calling customer care, I lost Rs.100. Worst customer service. I need your help to get my money refunded.

- Mr.Prabhakar

Solution:

After CAI's mediation, the complainant got the money refunded.

Mr. Prabhakar's Testimonial:

I thank CAI for solving my complaint.

COMPLAINT AGAINST INDIAPOST

Complaint:

I sent a parcel through Head Post office – Basavangudi to be delivered to my son residing in USA. The contents were clothing materials for my grandson. The total charges were Rs.4000/- The parcel was refunded to me undelivered and the post parcel was tampered and in torn condition and full of petroleum smell. I registered a complaint with post office concerned. Till date I received one reply stating the matter rests with Air Cargo Mumbai. I have lost my money, damaged condition of dresses with torn cover. Postal authorities are trying to abdicate their responsibility. Kindly therefore take up the matter on my behalf.

- Mr.S.Rajagopal



Solution:

After CAI's mediation the complainant got the sum of Rs.2882/- refunded and the Postal department stated that they cannot be held responsible for any damage or loss.

Mater Ajith's Testimonial:

I thank CAI for solving my complaint

CONSUMER ALERTS!!

- *If you come across any dealer charging in excess of MRP, please feel free to call 9445398739 or 9445898770 which is managed by the controller of Legal Metrology, Tamil Nadu.*
- *While using Non-stick cooker do not heat it above 500°F. At this temperature the chemical used for coating disintegrates and harms your health.*

CONSUMER CASES SOLVED BY CAI

COMPLAINT AGAINST APOLLO TYRES

Complaint:

I own a Hyundai Santro Car. I purchased Apollo tyres in the month of April, 2014 and changed at Lal Tyres. The right front Tyre got punctured. The vehicle was driven less than 100 kms. When checked with my mechanic, he said that it was a manufacturing defect. Following which I posted a complaint with Apollo Tyres. Apollo quoted that it was due to 'penetration' of sharp objects at side wall and is also willing to compensate 50% of the amount as goodwill. I am not convinced with this and they are not ready to replace the defective tyre. I need the replacement of the tyre, kindly do the needful.

Mr.K.Lakshmanan



Solution:

After CAI's intervention with Apollo Tyres, the complainant got the replacement of the tyre to his satisfaction.

Mr.Lakshmanan's Testimonial:

I thank CAI for getting me the replacement of the tyre and helping me in this matter.

COMPLAINT AGAINST STERLING RESORTS

Complaint:

I purchased a Samsung Grand gt-9082 during the promotional offer period. The free offer was Sennheiser Premium Stereo Headset worth Rs.2290. But the headset was denied for the purchase of my mobile by the shop. I require the free "Sennheiser Premium Headset" mentioned in the promotional offer. Kindly help me to get the free offer.

Mr.Thiyagarajan



Solution:

After CAI's mediation, the complainant received the "Sennheiser Premium Headset" from Samsung India as mentioned in the offer.

Mr.Mathi's Testimonial:

I thank CAI on the efforts taken towards resolving this issue. I am proud and happy that though the process was realtime consuming, the justice was delivered.

COMPLAINT AGAINST EUREKA FORBES

Complaint:

I purchased a Vacuum Cleaner from the direct sales office in T.Nagar. A person named Mr.Manikandan came to my flat several times for the sale of the machine. He informed us that there is a scheme for Senior Citizens, that the company will provide a person to clean the house, free of cost, once in 4 months. After repeated pressure from him, assuming that a person will come and clean the house, as we both are agreed and purchased. I shall be glad, if you will please help us to solve the problem by asking the company to provide a person as promised by the sales person or to take back the machine, which we are unable to use due to our old age. Kindly help us.

Mr.C.S.Vidyasagar



Solution:

After CAI's mediation with the Eureka Forbes, the machine was taken back and money refunded to the complainant.

Mr. C.S.Vidyasagar's Testimonial:

I thank CAI for taking up this issue and the kind help done to the Senior Citizen.

CAI IS HERE TO HELP!!

CONSUMER HELPLINE:- 044-6633 4346

Do you have a complaint against a manufacturer, trader or service provider? If yes, CAI is here to help. Call our Helpline ANYTIME and record your complaint either in Tamil or English. We will get back to you within three working days.

Consumers Association of India (CAI)

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