



## A Study on the Impact of Consumer Awareness and Consumer Rights Regarding Food Product among Youth and Adults– A Cause of Concern

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Received : December, 2021

Accepted : January, 2022

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**Abstract:** Any individual who purchases products or services for their personal use is called a consumer. The consumer is indeed the king of the market, but in reality, consumers are treated very badly in the market. The consumers are not sure of getting qualitative goods as per their demand and price payments. The most important step in consumer education is making them aware of consumer rights and responsibilities and to empower them for self-protection from the different kinds of misleading advertisements and unethical behavior of the salesman. This paper aimed is to measure the level of consumer awareness among youth and adults and also to know their perception about today's market. The data were

collected using a scheduled questionnaire and interview method. A total of 246 respondents was considered for the present study. This research is based on descriptive and explanatory research. The method of data collection is based on primary data. The method of sampling technique adopted is stratified random sampling. In the survey it is found that consumers are not aware during the buying process and in general, the level of awareness among youth and adults on consumerism is not satisfactory.

**Keywords:** Consumer awareness, Consumer rights, and responsibilities, Consumer education, Misleading advertisement.

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### Introduction:

Money is one of the items most frequently passed from hand to hand (Freeman,1985; Jawetz et al,1987). Paper currency act as an environmental vehicle for transmission of potential

A consumer is a person who buys goods and services primarily for personal, social, family, household, and similar needs, not directly related to entrepreneurial or business activities. In a country like India, which has a higher population rate and illiteracy rate there is a great need to increase consumer awareness, among different age groups. Arora et.al (2014). It is often said that consumer is king, but in reality, consumers are treated very badly in the market. In this era of commercialization and globalization, the

main objective of each producer is to maximize their profit. In each and every possible way, the producer is trying to increase the sale of their products. Therefore, in fulfillment of their aim, they forgot the interests of the consumer and start exploiting them in various ways for example – overcharging, under weighing, selling adulterated and poor-quality goods, misleading the consumer by giving false advertisements, etc. Thus, in order to save themselves from being cheated, a consumer must be aware about their rights and responsibilities. Even today, the buying behavior of consumers is influenced by the positive and negative impacts of advertisements. Consumer approach shopping with different motives, perspectives, rationales, and considerations. Kangkana (2017)

In today's generation, advertisements have become a powerful tool for marketers to convince customers globally. Advertising is one of the most important parts of any market. It is a form of communication. It is a major and important element for the economic growth of the marketers and different companies in competition. *Ryan's (1996)*. Marketers and advertisers make a various misleading advertisement that contains a lot of false claim and wrong information about the products and which help to manipulate the customers. With fake advertisements, the consumer did not see much information about the products and avoided the important information. Advertisements related to products are done through media, newspapers, magazines and many more food advertisements also mislead the consumer and encourage consumption of unhealthy food items. Although televised food advertisements target all age groups, food items are the most heavily promoted product category targeting youth adults and children. *Harris et.al (2013)* stated that successfully resisting food marketing requires comprehension of advertisements, how to effectively resist, cognitive maturity with fully developed self-regulatory abilities, and the motivation to resist. One of the most important and successful consumer awareness campaigns in recent times has been the “JAGO GRAHAK JAGO” campaign. It is a great example of successful consumer awareness and consumer protection in India. In India the Consumer Protection Act, implemented in 1986, gives easy and fast compensation to consumer grievances. This act is regarded as unique and highly progressive social

welfare legislation. This Act recognized the following six consumer rights and responsibilities are right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose, right to be heard, right to seek redressal, right to consumer education. The consumer has to be aware of his rights that play a key role in the market. *Sheetal, (2015)*. The success of consumerism is a strong function of consumer awareness and to avoid exploitation, a consumer must become knowledgeable.

#### **Objectives:**

- To assess the level of consumer rights awareness and knowledge among youth and adults.
- To identify the quality consciousness level and frequency of problems faced by the youth and adults.
- To find out the awareness level regarding misleading advertisements among youth and adults.

#### **Hypothesis:**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The level of consumer rights awareness and knowledge among youth and adult is not satisfactory.

#### **Need of the Study:**

The need for consumer awareness and consumer protection is arisen due to several reasons such as bad quality of goods and services sold, selling without providing bill, misleading advertisement, lack of complete information about the product and producer/seller, environmental pollution due to mindless and wasteful consumer.

In the market, the consumers are cheated by the various businessmen as they sell products by weighing the products on faulty scales, overpricing, duplicate products, etc. Thus, the consumers are facing a number of problems from the initial stage of their life. Consumer awareness is important as consumers need to be able to obtain accurate, unbiased information about the products and services they purchase. This enables them to make the best choices based on their interests and prevents them from being mistreated or misled by the business.

The present research was carried out with the aim to ascertain the socio-economic profile of the youth and adults and to get an insight into awareness regarding

quality assurance marks, consumer rights, their habits to check/read the labeling, and various problems faced by them and their solution while shopping.

### **Problems of the Study:**

The main problem that has been observed very often is that consumers are not worried about the different unethical actions seen in the market. Even among the educated, the rate of ignorance on consumer rights especially in the younger generation and adulthood is high. Until and unless the consumers become aware of different laws and about their rights, the different unethical behaviors such as overcharging, under weighing, selling of adulterated and poor-quality goods, misleading the consumers by giving false advertisements, etc. are not controlled and this has been the important factor for creating consumer awareness.

So, in this research, we have selected youth and adults as respondents for this study because through which we can reach more people. Many exploitations and unfair trade practices happened due to our ignorance of consumer rights. So, this study will help to educate out the consumer awareness among youth and adult.

### **Methods and Materials:**

The present study is entitled “**A study on the impact of consumer awareness and consumer rights regarding food product among youth and**

**adults –A cause of concern”** was conducted by using the following methods based on the nature of problems and objectives. It has been discussed in the following sub-heads.

**Research Design:** A descriptive and explanatory research design was followed to conduct the present study.

**Study Area:** The study area under consideration was selected in north eastern part of the Patna district from four areas (*Punaichak, RajaBazaar, GolaRoad, and Boring Road*) under the category of the street vendor, local shops, supermarkets, and malls were selected purposively for the present study because such types of the study were not done in the previous year.

**Selection of the Respondents :** Based on the objective of the study the sampling method will be adopted. Two hundred forty-six (246) respondents were purposively selected by the sample size estimation. Youth and Adults aged between 20-40 years have taken for the study from the following areas of Patna based on the different categories. This area was selected after the pilot survey. Out of the total respondent selected, 123 respondents were selected as sub-sample by stratified random sampling. For the consumer awareness study, 60 respondents were further selected and they were divided into two groups, experimental and control groups, having 30 respondents in each group.



**Plate 1.1 Collecting information from respondents  
Area-Punaichak**



**Plate 1.2 Collecting information respondents  
Area-Boring Road**





**Plate 1.3 Collecting information from respondents**  
**Area-Gola Road**



**Plate1.4 Collecting information from respondents**  
**Area: Raja Bazaar**

**Tools and Techniques of Datacollection:** The scheduled questionnaire and interview method was prepared for collecting the information about respondent. It includes general information of the respondent, consumer awareness, rights and responsibilities, quality consciousness level and misleading advertisement.

**Pilot Study and Pre-Testing of the Schedule:** In order to address the issue, the schedule was pre-assessed with 20-25 respondents involved in the nearby actual study area. The pilot study pointed out some of the components which required slightly modifications these minor changes were suitably incorporated before final print of the schedule was done for the purpose of present study.

**Data Analysis:** Tabulation and Frequency distribution methods were taken for the data analysis.

## Result and Discussion:

**Table 1. General information of the respondents**

Variable	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
<b>Age group</b>				
20 -30	123	100	0	0
30 -40	0	0	76	61.78
40 -50	0	0	47	38.21
<b>Category</b>				
Youth	123	100	0	0
Adult	0	0	123	100
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	77	62.60	98	79.67
Female	46	37.39	25	20.32

**Source:** Primary Data

The findings of the table 1 give an overview of the respondents regarding their general information like age group, category and gender. From the above findings it is clear that there are 123 youth and 123 adult respondents and 100% of the respondents belonged to the age group 20 to 30 years, 61.78% of the respondents belonged to the age group 30 to 40 years

and 38.21% of the respondent belonged to the age group that is 40 to 50 years. 62.60% of youth respondents are male and 37.39% of the youth respondents are female. 79.67% of adult respondents are male and 20.32% of adult respondents are female. The findings clearly indicates that majority of respondents both in youth and adult are male.

**Table 2. Family status of the respondents**

<i><b>Variable</b></i>	<i><b>Youth N=123</b></i>	<i><b>Percentage</b></i>	<i><b>Adult N=123</b></i>	<i><b>Percentage</b></i>
<b><i>Socio -economic status</i></b>				
Upper class	5	4.06	12	9.75
Upper middle class	11	8.94	14	11.38
Middleclass	85	69.10	74	60.16
Lower middle class	19	15.44	11	8.94
Lower	3	2.43	12	9.75
<b><i>Education Qualification</i></b>				
Matriculation	15	12.19	20	16.26
Intermediate	30	24.39	35	28.45
Graduate	68	55.24	48	39.02
Post Graduate	4	3.25	10	8.13
Ph.D.	6	4.87	8	6.50
Illiterate	0	0	2	1.62
<b><i>Type of employment</i></b>				
Job -Govt./Private	25	20.32	37	30.08
Agricultural Sector	2	1.62	0	0
Daily wages	11	8.94	14	11.38
Business	27	21.95	65	52.84
Unemployed	58	47.15	7	5.69
Others	0	0	0	0
<b><i>Monthly Income (Rupees)</i></b>				
>10000	25	20.32	18	14.63
>25000	48	39.02	62	50.40
>50000	37	30.08	31	25.20
<50000	13	10.56	12	9.75

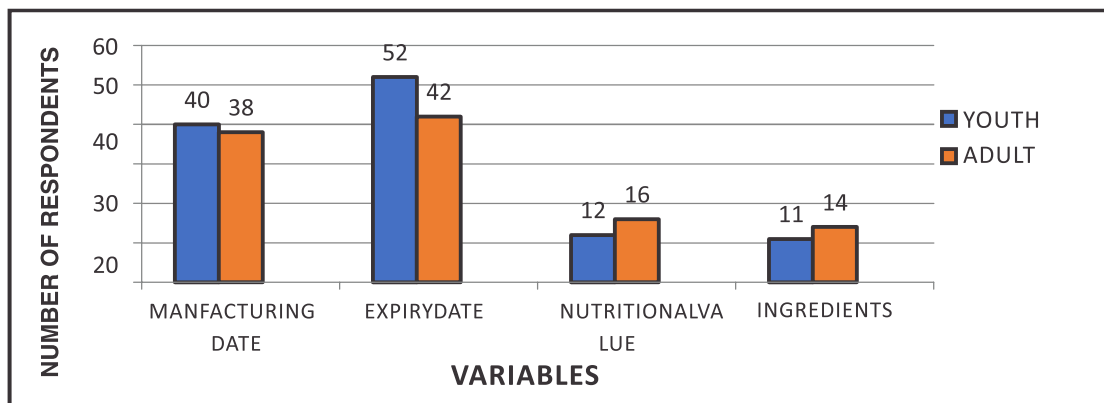
**Interpretation:** To assess the knowledge regarding demographic profile of the respondents four variables have been taken i.e., socioeconomic status, education qualification, types of employment and monthly income. The findings from the Table 2 clearly indicates that 69.10% of youth and 60.16% of adult belong to the middle-class family which is high both in youth and adult. In case of educational qualification 55.24% of youth and 39.02% of adult have found to be educated up to graduation level which means most of

the respondents are mature enough to take the decision as an ethical consumer. About 21.95% of youth and 52.84% of adult are employed in business sector. The findings indicates that 39.02% of youth and 50.40% of adult belongs to the family earning rupees more than 25000 which means most of the families belongs to the middle class.

**Objectives 1. To assess the level of consumer rights awareness and knowledge among Youth and Adults.**

**Table 3. Awareness level of respondent on four different criteria.**

WHAT DO YOU LOOK AT IN THE PACKET OF PRODUCTS?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
Manufacturing Date	40	32.52	38	30.89
Expiry Date	52	42.27	42	34.14
Nutritional value	12	9.75	16	13.00
Ingredients	11	8.94	14	11.38

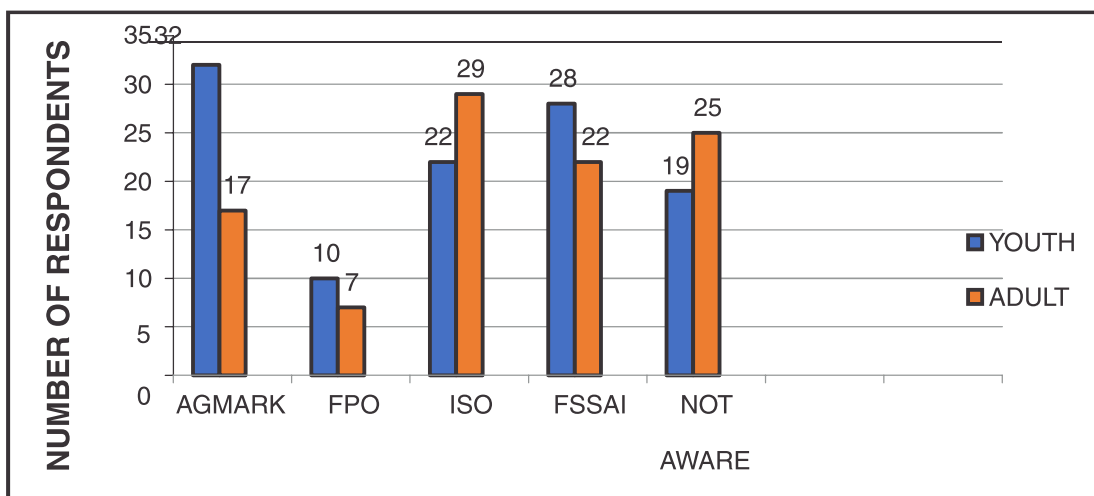


**Fig. 1. Awareness level of respondent on four different criteria**

**Interpretation:** Fig.1 shows that the highest percentage of expiry dates have been seen by the youth.

**Table 4. Awareness level of respondent regarding certification mark.**

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF CERTIFICATION MARK?				
Variable	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
AGMARK	32	26.01	17	13.82
FPO	10	8.13	7	5.69
ISO	22	17.88	29	23.57
FSSAI	28	22.76	22	17.88
Not Aware	19	15.44	25	20.32

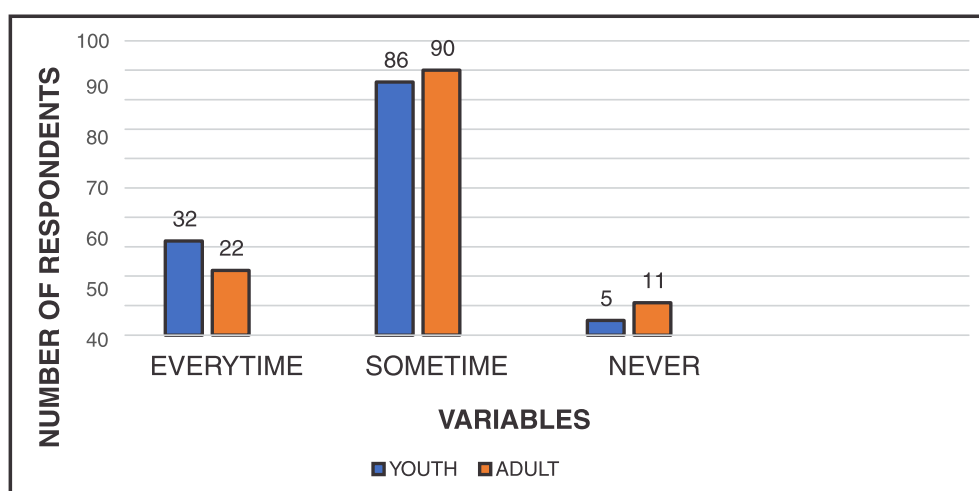


**Fig. 2.** Awareness level of respondent regarding certification mark

**Interpretation:** Fig. 2 shows the highest percentage of AGMARK have been seen by youth and the percentage of ISO have been seen by an adult more than youth.

**Table 5. Practices of asking for the bill while buying the products.**

DO YOU TAKE THE BILL WHEN YOU BUY PRODUCTS?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	AdultN=123	Percentage
Every time	32	26.01	22	17.88
Sometime	86	69.91	90	73.17
Never	5	4.06	11	8.94



**Fig. 3.** Practices of asking for the bill while buying the products.

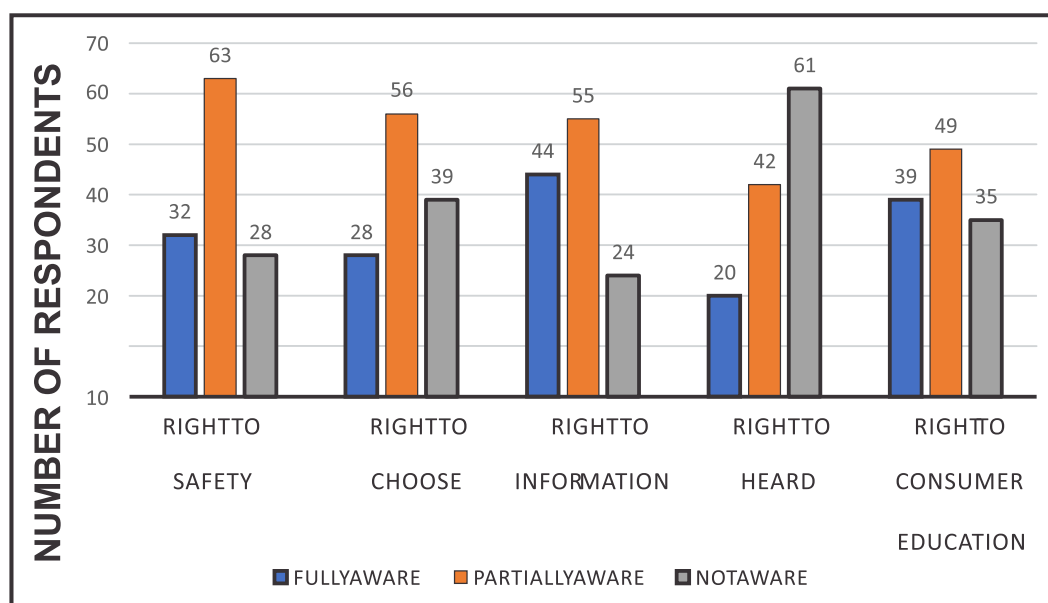
**Interpretation:** Fig. 3 shows that adult takes bill sometimes more than youth. The difference between youth and adults while taking the bill is not so more.

**Table 6. Awareness Level of Respondents Regarding Consumer Rights****Awareness Level among Youth**

Variables	Fully aware	%	Partially aware	%	Not aware	%
Right to Safety	32	26.01	63	51.21	28	22.76
Right to Choose	28	22.76	56	45.52	39	31.70
Right to Information	44	35.77	55	44.71	24	19.51
Right to Heard	20	16.26	42	34.14	61	49.59
Right to Consumer education	39	31.70	49	39.83	35	28.45

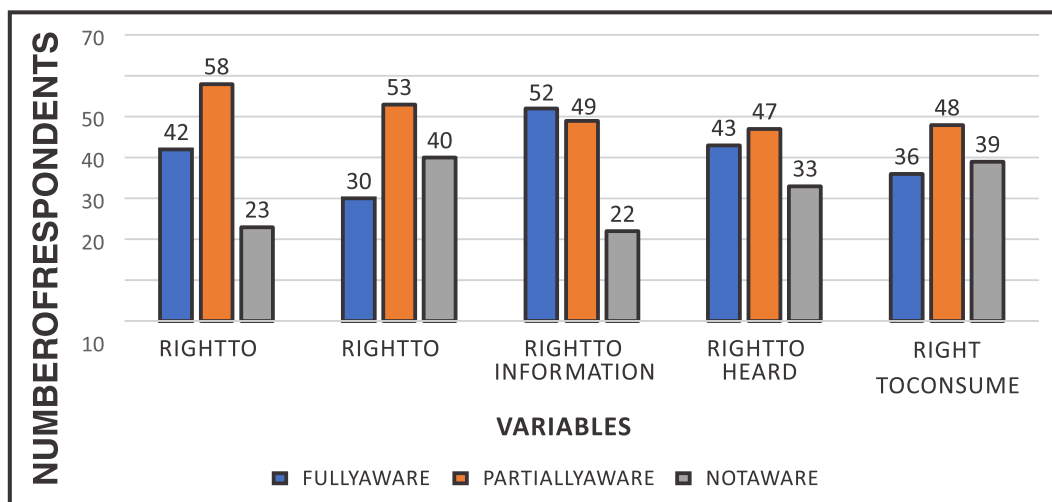
**Awareness Level among Adult**

Variables	Fully aware	%	Partially aware	%	Not aware	%
Right to Safety	42	34.14	58	47.15	23	18.69
Right to Choose	30	24.39	53	43.08	40	32.52
Right to Information	52	42.27	49	39.83	22	17.88
Right to Heard	43	34.95	47	38.21	33	26.82
Right to Consumer Education	36	29.26	48	39.02	39	31.70

**Fig. 4.** Awareness level of respondents regarding consumer rights for youth

**Interpretation:** Fig. 4 shows that majority of youth are partially aware about right to safety and they are fully aware about right to education.



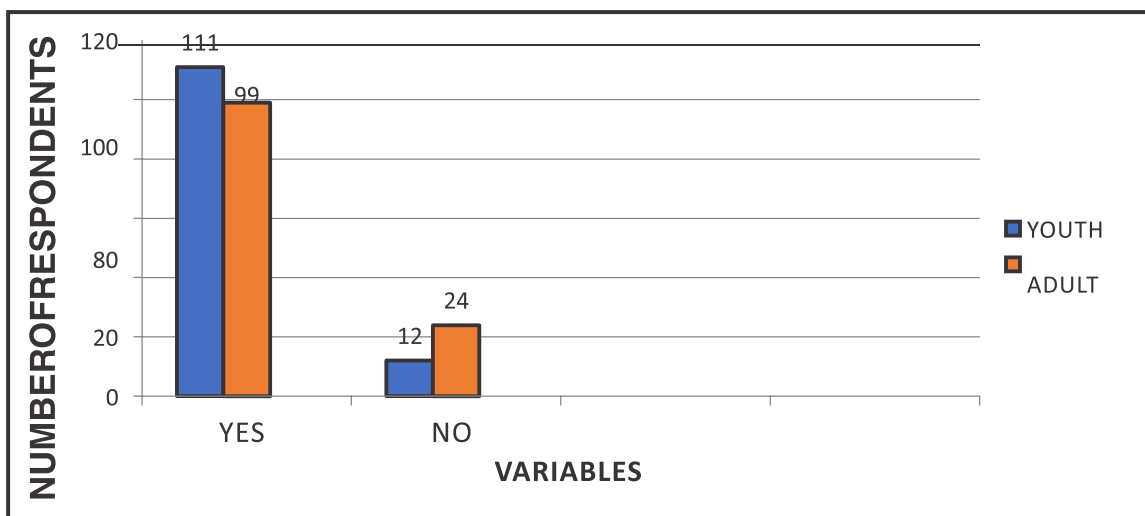


**Fig .5.** Awareness level of respondents regarding consumer rights for adult.

**Interpretation:** Interpretation: Fig. 5 shows that majority of adult are partially aware about right to safety and are not aware regarding right to information.

**Table 7.** Level of awareness regarding consumer forum court.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CONSUMER FORUM COURT?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
Yes	111	90.24	99	80.48
No	12	9.75	24	19.51



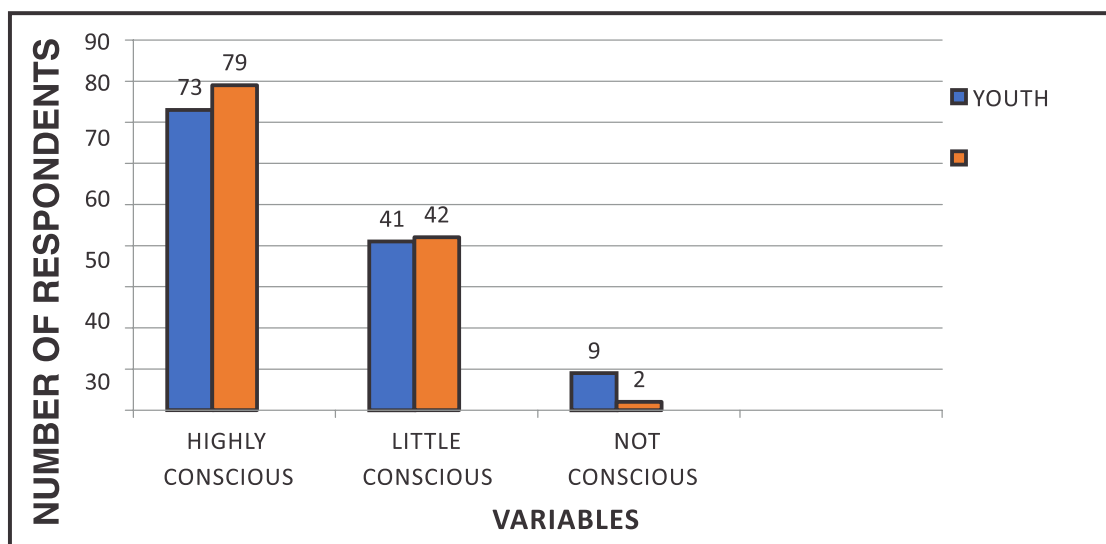
**Fig.6.** Level of awareness regarding consumer forum court

**Interpretation:** Fig. 6 shows that majority of youth are having more knowledge than adults regarding consumer forum court.

**Objectives 2.** To identify the quality consciousness level and frequency of problems faced by the Youth and Adults.

**Table 8.** Showing consciousness level of respondents before buying the food products.

How conscious are you regarding quality when buying food products?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	Youth N=123	Percentage
Highly conscious	73	59.34	79	64.22
Little conscious	41	33.33	42	34.14
Not conscious	9	7.31	2	1.62

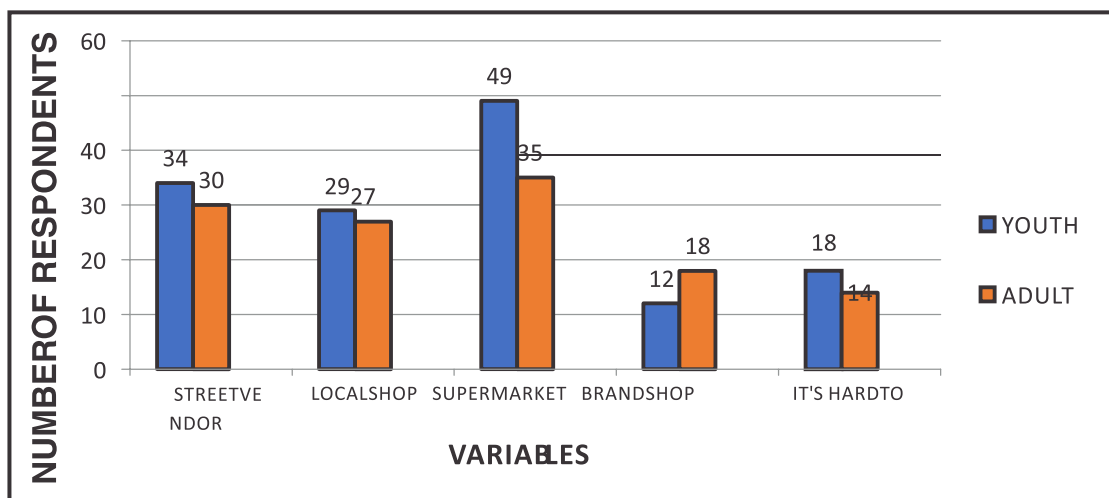


**Fig. 7.** Showing consciousness level of respondents before buying the food products.

**Interpretation:** Fig. 7 shows that adult is highly conscious than youth before buying food products. and there is only one percent difference in little consciousness level between youth and adult.

**Table 7.** Level of awareness regarding consumer forum court.

FROM WHERE DO YOU USUALLY BUY THE FOOD STUFF?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
Street vendor	34	27.64	30	24.39
Local shop	29	23.57	27	21.95
Super market	49	39.83	35	28.45
Brand shop	12	9.75	18	14.63
It's hard to say	18	14.63	14	11.38

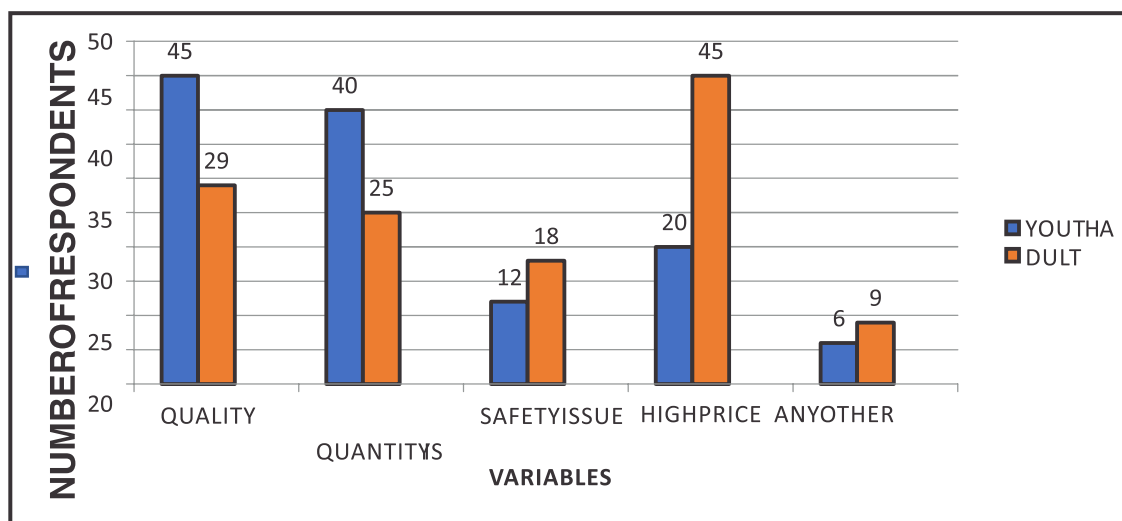


**Fig. 8.** Respondents various categories of purchasing food

**Interpretation:** Fig.8 shows that the percentage of buying from a street vendor, local shop, and supermarket is high in youth and the percentage of buying from a branded shop is high in adults compared to the youth.

**Table 10. Problem faced by the respondents while buying the food products**

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM DO YOU FACE WHILE BUYING THE FOOD PRODUCTS?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
Quality issue	45	36.58	29	23.57
Quantity issue	40	32.52	25	20.32
Safety Issue	12	9.75	18	14.63
High Price	20	16.26	45	36.58
Any other	6	4.87	9	7.31



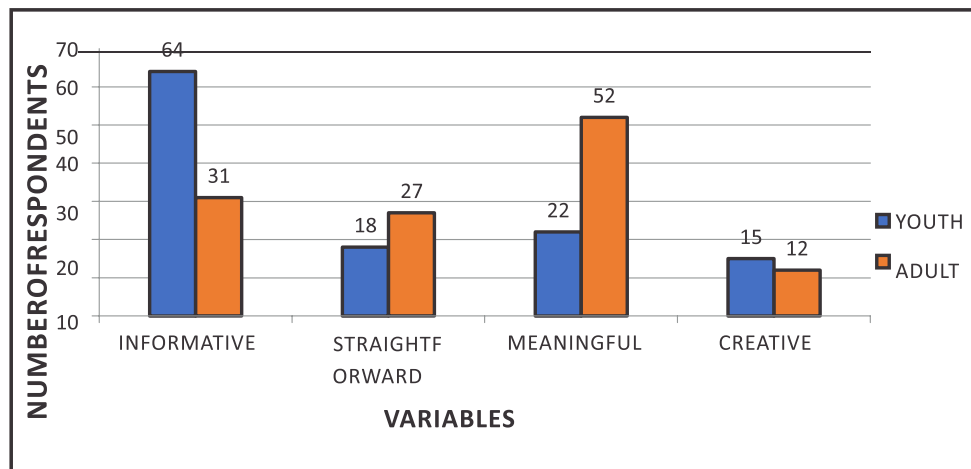
**Fig. 9.** Problem faced by the respondents while buying the food products.

**Interpretation:** Fig.9 show that youth face more problem regarding quality and quantity issues while adult focuses on high price issue more as compared to the youth.

**Objectives 3. To find out the awareness level regarding misleading advertisements among youth and Adults.**

**Table 11. Different criteria of advertisements that consumers like.**

WHAT KIND OF A DVERTISEMENT DO YOU LIKE?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
Informative	64	52.03	31	30.76
Straightforward	18	14.63	27	23.07
Meaningful	22	17.88	52	48.71
Creative	15	12.19	12	12.82

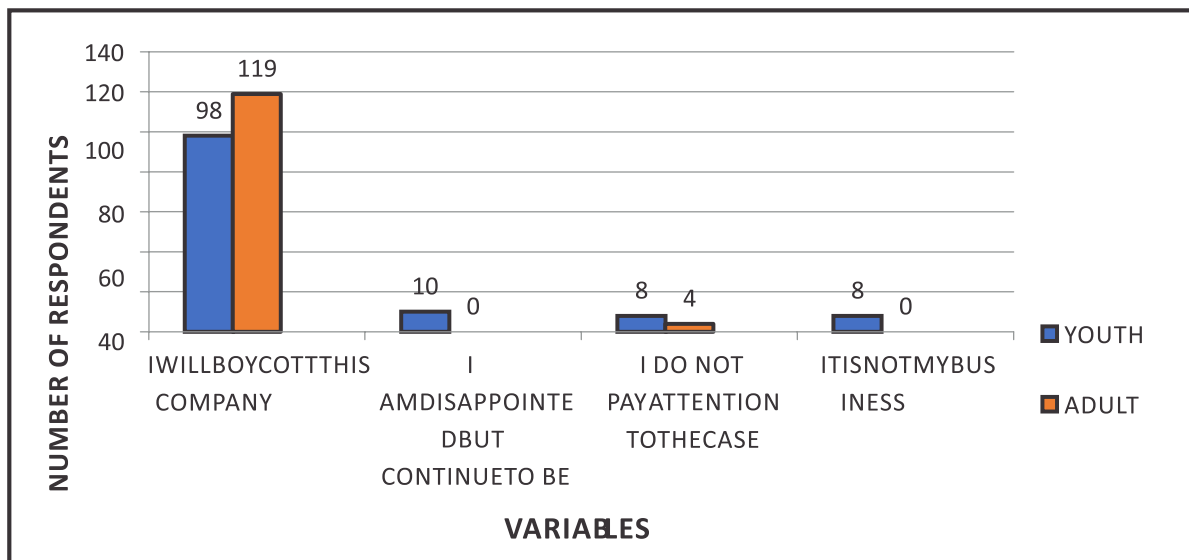


**Fig. 10.** Different criteria of advertisements that consumers like.

**Interpretation:** Fig. 10 shows that youth watch more informative advertisements compare to adults and this figure also shows that adults watch more straight forward (to the point) and meaningful advertisements compare to youth.

**Table 12 Respondents behavior towards the company, when the company advertised in an unethical way.**

IF A COMPANY WHERE YOU ARE A LOYAL CUSTOMER ADVERTISE UNETHICAL WAY,WHAT COULD BE YOUR BEHAVIOUR AFTER UNETHICAL ADVERTISING?				
Variables	Youth N=123	Percentage	Adult N=123	Percentage
I will boycott this company	98	79.67	119	96.74
I am disappointed but continue to be a loyal customer.	10	8.13	0	0
I do not pay attention to the case	8	6.50	4	3.25
It is not my business	8	6.50	0	0



**Fig. 11.** Respondents behavior towards the company, when the company advertised in an unethical way.

**Interpretation:** Fig.11 shows that the percentage of adults is high in boycotting the company if the company shows unethical advertisement.

### Summary and Conclusion:

The consumer is the real deciding factor for all economic activities. An aware consumer is an empowered consumer. In this age of capitalism and globalization, the main objective of each producer is to maximize their profit. Therefore, in fulfillment of their aim they forget the interest of consumer and start exploiting the min various ways. Thus, in order to save themselves from being cheated, it is necessary for consumer to beware. After analyzing all the above consideration, the findings of the study can be concluded that majority of youth and adult are partially aware of the consumer rights. It is found that the practices and behavior during buying is satisfactory among youth and adult. They have verified MRP, Manufacturing Date, and Date of Expiry details too. But quality assurance mark is not properly known to many consumers such ignorance gives sellers more chance to cheat and exploit consumers. Majority of consumer possess average awareness toward consumer responsibilities. Not much difference is found between youth and adult with regard to the level of awareness on consumer education. To sum up it can be said that there is a great need of making youth and adult aware about their rights and responsibilities. In general, they are ignorant about their rights as a consumer. An

aware consumer not only protects themselves from exploitation, but induces efficiency, transparency and accountability in the entire manufacturing and service sector

### Suggestions:

- The government should make concerted effort to educate the consumers particularly youth and adults. They must be educated through via awareness programs like door-to-door campaign/campaign trails, seminars, symposiums, workshops, webinars, and conferences etc. in both rural and urban areas.
- There is a great need to educate consumers about their rights and responsibilities so that manufacturers or sellers do not able to cheat and exploit them. Hence, I would like to suggest the authority to kindly include a topic of Consumer Protection Act 1986 in the syllabus of school and college going students of all stream of the state board/University so as to make the upcoming generation aware of their rights responsibilities as a consumer.
- Numbers of cases are found against exploitation of consumer in the market and the



consumer do not able to raise a voice for themselves. Hence, it is suggested to form an association to empower consumer from unscrupulous practices they tend to face in the market.a

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