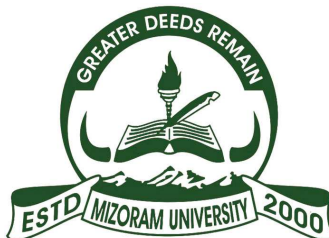


# **AWARENESS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION AMONG THE YOUTH IN LUNGLEI TOWN, MIZORAM**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of  
**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN COMMERCE**

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JUNE, 2012

## DECLARATION

I Michael Lalrinmawia, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form bias of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy/Doctor of Philosophy in Commerce Department.

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012

(Michael Lalrinmawia)

Place: Aizawl, Mizoram

Research Scholar

## Preface

A person who buys any commodity for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment is a consumer. Consumer protection is the efforts to ensure that the products purchased

By consumer are safe to use, will meet all express or implied performance standards, that consumers will have adequate information to make safe purchase and use decisions, that marketers are prevented from using fraudulent methods to sell their products, and that marketers compete fairly in the market place. The present study attempts to bring into focus the role and status of consumers who are youth, and their problems arising from the given socio-economic setup of the Mizo society.

The study uses primary as well as secondary data. Secondary data is collected from publications from various journals, books, research reports and other publications from government and non-government sources. The primary data is collected through a structured schedule as well as from observations and informal interviews. The study uses statistical tools like chi square test, Yate's Correction and percentiles. For displaying of figures, tables and pie diagrams are utilised.

The study is broadly divided into four chapters which are:

1. Introduction
2. Consumer Protection in Mizoram
3. Awareness of Consumer Protection among Youth in Lunglei
4. Conclusions and Suggestions

Chapter 1 highlight about the meaning of consumer and the problems of consumers are also stated. In this chapter the literature reviewed and the research methodology used are highlighted.

Chapter 2 deals with various issues like Legal Perspectives and Conceptual Issues of Consumer Protection, International Movements in Consumer Protection, UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, Consumerism in India, consumer organisations in Mizoram and list of consumer clubs in Mizoram.

Chapter 3 is a brief summarisation of the consumer activities in Lunglei, it includes the main findings and analysis of the research. Chapter 4 deals with the conclusion of the research and the main suggestions of the research.

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Date:28<sup>th</sup> June 2012

(Michael Lalrinmawia)

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## List of Abbreviations

1. ISI – Indian Standards Institute
2. IOCU – International Organisation of Consumer Union
3. CI – Consumers International
4. FPO – Food Product Order
5. ECOSOC - United Nations Economic and Social Council
6. UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
7. UN – United Nation
8. UNIDO - The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
9. ,UNICEF
10. ILO - International Labour Organisation
11. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
12. WHO – World Health Organisation
13. FICCI – Federation of Indian Chambeer of Commerce and Industry
14. GDP – Gross Domestic Product
15. IT- Information Technology
16. NGO – Non-government Organisation
17. MCU – Mizoram Consumer Union
18. SEBI – Security and Exchange Board of India
19. SDO – Sub-divisional Officer
20. LDCA – Lunglei Distric Consumer Association
21. SR - Serial
22. MZ - Mizoram
23. H/S – High School
24. I & PRO – Information and Protoco;
25. DC – Deputy Commissioner
26. PHE – Public Health Engineer
27. EE – Executive Engineer

28. PWD – Public Works Department
29. FCI – Food Corporation of India
30. LS – Lok Shaba
31. GHSS – Government Higher Secondary School
32. BHSS – Baptist Higher Secondary School
33. MJA – Mizoram Journalist Association
34. ETC –Extension Training Center
35. HPC – High Power Committee
36. BSNL – Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited
37. DCPC – District Consumer Protection Council
38. ATM – Automated Teller Machine

## **Introduction**

A person who buys any commodity for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment is a consumer. For the purpose of the Consumer Protection Act, the word “Consumer” has been defined separately for “goods” and “services”.

(A) A “consumer” of “goods” means a person belonging to any of the following categories:

- \* One who buys or agrees to buy any goods for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised under any system of deferred payments;

- \* It also includes any user of such goods other than the person who actually buys goods and such use is made with the approval of the purchaser

(B) A “consumer” of “service” means a person belonging to the following categories:

- \* One who hires or avails of any service or services for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment.

- \* It includes any beneficiary of all such service other than the one who actually hires or avails of the service for consideration and such services are availed with the approval of such person.

The present study attempts to bring into focus the role and status of consumers who are youth, and their problems arising from the given socio-economic setup of the Mizo society. In the modern times, the young generation is standing on Information Super Highway, ready to catch and board everything passing by. The term 'youth' is loosely defined and used in India. While some interpret youth to represent the 13-24 years olds, some others are seen to view them as basing them between 19-35 years. In the Indian context, where young people usually attain financial independence and stability somewhat later, mainly in their 20's, one may take the youth between 13-24 years mostly representing the Generation Next and the youth who are 25 years or more as part of Generation Now (Tiwari 2010). The youth who are not capable of independently funding their consumption decision now but may be able to do so in the next few years are called Generation Next and the youth who are capable of funding their consumption decision now are called Generation Now. In terms of sheer size, Generation Next is almost 270 million individuals strong out of the current Indian population, accounting for 23% of Indians. At 263 million, Generation Now also accounts for an almost equal 23% Indians. The age in which a person is considered a 'youth', and thus eligible for special treatment under the law and throughout society varies around the world. Youth is defined by The Danish Youth Council as, "any member of society between the ages of 15 – 35." According to the World Bank, "Youth comprises persons between the age of 15 and 24." The United Nation General Assembly defines youth as , "those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years." The

definition given by the United Nation General Assembly for youth i.e. the age group 15-24 is taken into consideration for this study.

Consumer activities and practices are as old as human civilization (Pathi 2011). A developing country like India is burdened with the incidence of poverty, high rate of unemployment and low rate of literacy. The present scenario, have led to huge volume of problems faced by the people, especially in consumer related issues.

Consumer awareness is a broad area, with this regard there is still widespread ignorance and fuzzy alertness among the consumer. The consumer usually is not conscious and alert enough to the discrepancies present around him.

In the present era of open market, buyers and sellers come face to face whereby the sellers hardly make disclosure about the quality of the product. With the advent of technology, the manufacturing activities become more organized whereby leading the producers to becoming stronger and more organized. But a huge mass of the consumer is still unorganized. As a result the consumer are misled, duped and deceived in many areas (Agarwal, Saxena & Saxena 2006). In spite of the recent impact of the consumers in the globalized world, consumerism is still very immature India. Due to apathy and lack of education amongst the masses, consumer awareness is still very low. The consumers are cheated through various devices invented by clever businessmen,

and traders. Taking Mizoram into account, consumers lack education and information resources, testing facilities, competent leadership, price-control mechanism etc. Due

consideration have not been given to protection of consumer interest by the producers and sellers alike. Theoretically it is assumed that the producer of the product tries to conform to the needs of the consumer while trying to maximize the sales. In doing so, the means applied for maximization of sales maybe such that they serve both the producer and the consumer. But in reality, some of the methods employed to increase the sales are to serve the interest of the producer but the same is against the interest of the consumers. In other words, consumers are exploited. Consumers form the largest group in any country and they are the central point of all economic activity but they are the most voiceless group (Kumar, 2011).

Taking Mizoram into consideration, there is lack of wide spread of information and facts regarding consumer issues. The rights, duties and privileges of consumers are neglected and taken casually. This is especially seen among the youth of Mizoram. Violation of their rights and exploitation is prevailing greatly. This study is designed to be helpful for the consumer as a whole to know their basic rights and duties. It will also be helpful in enhancing deeper studies into other aspect of consumer issues. Another aspect for this study is to awake the consumers to rise to the occasion and assert their rights as consumers without forgetting their duties and responsibilities. This study is undertaken to be a stepping stone for the youth to be aware of the consumer activities prevailing in the day to day world.



## **Review of literature**

There are many studies focusing on consumer, consumer protection and consumer awareness at the international level and at the national level.

Sujan (1985) suggested that consumers have well defined product categories in memory and that expectation about these categories guide evaluation and decision processes. In addition, the finding that experts perceive subtypes might serve as the focus for possible positioning strategies in which a product is positioned within an overall category but yet perceived to be distinctly different.

The consumption experience and the easily influenced experience have become important themes in consumer behavior research and discussed the ambiguity in a decision environment indicates a need for measurement methods to determine whether a new product offers advantages that are easy or very difficult to comprehend. (Deighton and Hoch , 1989)

Judgments of a product or services are affected not just by its own characteristics but by the characteristics of other products or services judged concurrently or retrieved from memory. Contrast effects can effect psychological representations of objects but does not in all cases. Context effects may depend on the extent to which a judgment task allows consumers to tap prior knowledge (Chakravarti, Lynch and Mitra, 1991)

When preferences are well defined and consumers are relatively unknowledgeable about brands, sequential exposure to information about different

brands produces differential learning about brands as a function of order of entry. Judgments held with convictions are persistent over time and resistant to competitors' activities which lead to a long run pioneering advantage. (Kardes and Kalyanaram , 1992)

Nowlis and Simonson (1996) found that when predicting the sales and share impact of a new feature, the characteristics of the brand to which the feature is added and the characteristics of the buyer's task should be considered. Some of the other options include changing the brand's price, offering price promotions, increasing advertising and altering distribution.

Bettman, Luce and Payne (1998) highlighted the importance of consumer choices concerning the selection, consumption and disposal of products and services and how consumers cope with the decisions they must make.

A study by Janiszewski (1998) suggested that consumer attitudes maybe influenced without consumers being able to identify the antecedents or the processes responsible for that influence due to the possibility that preferences maybe formed independently of conscious considerations.

A study by Luce (1998) shows that greater choice share for avoidant options will result when a decision's content has increased potential for eliciting negative emotion. Also avoidant choice will provide coping benefits, such that the choice of an avoidant option will result in less retrospective negative emotions.

Fournier and Mick (1999) revealed that their findings support the value of stepping back from the dominant comparison standards paradigm and its models, and stepping empathetically and longitudinally into consumers' lives to rediscover satisfaction as the complex human process.

Alba and. Osselaer (2000) stated that brand cues may block the learning of quality-determining attributes cues. Their findings also supplement research on the blocking phenomenon by demonstrating its robustness in the face of prior beliefs and the presence of more stingy predictors of quality. The preliminary conclusion was that learning is both forward looking and competitive in the sense that cues compete against each other for predictive values.

In another study it was found that people are not adept at recognizing the diagnosticity of their consumption experiences, confusing familiarity with the actual product knowledge (Hoch 2002).

In a study of consumer behaviour it has been greatly stressed that the study of consumer behavior evolved as a branch in its own, presenting the essential concepts in a concise logical sequence. The study illustrates situations that are typical and logical to most of the geographic areas of the country in consideration of the fact that in spite of some amount of universalisation due to globe-shrink, consumer behavior is still space specific and time specific. (Raju and Xardel, 2004)

Agrawal (2006) finds that complaining can not only increase satisfaction and product evaluation, but also influence actual purchasing behaviour. He also finds that consumers who were encouraged to express their complaints are more likely to purchase than consumers who were not asked to expressed themselves.

Recent study about economic analysis of consumer behaviour (Agrawal and Agrawal 2006) have concluded that the success of the consumer movement mainly depends upon the level of consumer awareness generated in the country by educated consumers about their rights and responsibilities. They also concluded that organised consumer is the most power and force to which the government and business bow. It is only awakened consumer who can mobilise consumers. Inadequacy of legislation, inefficient working of government departments and unscrupulous practices of business can be overcome only by the consumer himself.

Agarwal and Pandey (2006) shows that the failure of consumer groups in achieving their goals is mainly due to lack of support of the people which is a pre-requisite.

Agarwal, Saxena and Saxena (2006) have pointed out that there is little incentive for the individual consumer to take civil proceedings when there is not much money at stake. Even with the advent of small causes court, the consumer as an individual suffers from inertia, lack of energy, an unwillingness to cause trouble because of only a small amount of money.

Agarwal and Yadav (2006) have mentioned in their study that Indian consumers are cheated to the tune of several thousand crores of Rupees annually through various devices invented by clever businessmen and traders.

A study about the consumer rights and Consumer Protection Act (Aggrawal 2006) shows that the process of realising the rights of the consumer as envisaged in the Consumer Protection Act 1986 and ensuring right standards for the goods and services for which one makes a payment need some more modification in the existing laws and their consequent stringent implementations. He also mentioned that this objective can be achieved in a reasonable time frame only when all concerned act together and play their role.

In a study about consumer problems (Agrawal, Agrawal and Babita 2006), it was seen that since the sellers exploit consumers by resorting to incorrect weights and measures while selling food items or measuring fabrics, it is important to turn attention to commodities which are bought by weight or in measures.

In a study about consumer protection in Indian economy (Barik 2006) it is revealed that despite all the provisions available to the consumer, the rights of consumers are unrestrainedly violated. This study also shows that the result of this violation is due lack of proper publicity and consumer education among the public.

Bhardwaj and Sharma (2006) have the opinion that for consumer protection, mere legislation is not enough but more important is their enforcement not only in letters but also in spirit.

In a case study about food adulteration ( Chacko, Kiran and Tripathi 2006), it was found that inspite of consumers being aware of the existing problems of adulteration, they hardly seeked any opportunity to fight against it. The study concluded that the consumers have to be more alert regarding such problems and make use of various organisations promoted by Government and other organisations for the benefit and safety of consumers for a better life ahead.

In a recent study about government role in consumerism (Gaur and Lata 2006), the enforcement of consumer related laws have been seen to depend on the readiness of the State and the enthusiasm of the consumer to help himself.

In an empirical approach to consumer behaviour, Gupta and Shyam (2006) cited that in order to save the consumers from the exploitation and to save them from adulterated and substandard goods and deficient services, it becomes necessary for a consumer to know his rights as well as the responsibilities.

Mittal (2006) suggested that the only way by which consumers can make efforts to protect their interest and take care of their welfare is to analyse the purpose behind advertisements, package, designs, prices and other marketing activities.

In a study about government role for consumer awareness ( Nayyar 2006), it was found out that even if a consumer is aware of the consumer laws, he does not go to courts due to complicated, time-consuming and expensive legal procedures. Moreover, it was found out that the various laws provide no direct relief to the consumer as the focus is on punishment to persons violating the laws.

In a study about the role and importance of Consumer Organisations, Vijender (2006) stated that consumer organisations can play a decisive role by moulding the behaviour of consumers in the right direction. He also highlighted that the consumer organisations have to play pro-active role by creating awareness and then consumer protection among the masses as they are the platforms by which the agony of the consumer can be readdressed.

In a study about consumerism (Sahai and Sahai 2006) , it was analysed that the success of consumerism is a strong function of consumer awareness and the assistance the movement gets from the government.

Singh and Singh (2006) have concluded in their studies that in a free economy, the basic purpose is consumer welfare and therefore, it choose, accept or reject what the market offers at process quoted by sellers when there is freedom to choose, it encourages healthy competition between producers and sellers to assure good quality products, at prices that are equal or close to the costs of production.

Uppal (2006), have expressed in his studies that all the government agencies, consumer forums, consumer rights' protecting laws can be brought to benefit only when we realise our supreme veto powers of refusing a sub-standard products and exercise our rights to get the best and not by compromising on sub-standard products sold to us by traders, manufacturers and salesmen.

In a recent study of the phenomenon of consumer (Deshmukh, 2008), the nuances involved in the consumerism and its effect in the Indian society have been elucidated, wherein it tries to flash some light on benefit gained by some people in the society and it tries to enlighten the readers about the complications of the system without going into the technicalities. It is an analysis of consumerism in India.

Indiabizclub (2010) made an attempt to reveal the current situation of consumerism in India where it have propounded that the effects of poverty and illiteracy have great impact in the infancy of consumer awareness in the country.

Pathi (2011) have pointed out that consumer protection through consumer awareness needs a more flexible approach to deal with the challenges of present day world. The Government agencies, the laws and legal frameworks, the mass media and the consumer organizations play important role, but the main role have to be played by the consumer.

Kumar (2011) have highlighted that in a developing country, consumer movement is concentrated in the urban area only and that a large proportion of the rural masses are still vulnerable due to lack of adequate information on their rights and the remedies available to them.



In a study about consumer awareness and consumer protection (Lalrintluanga, & Pathi 2011), it was highlighted the women and young generation of Aizawl have become too fashion conscious. The soap opera, television, media, fashion shows etc are playing a noticeable effect on their psyche which ultimately effects their buying behavior as consumer.

From the studies reviewed the main highlights that we can see are that the consumers are usually unwilling to make complaints about the goods bought by them or the services rendered to them if the sum of money involved is not large. Moreover the reviews show that there is violation of the rights of the consumers due to lack of proper publicity. The reviews mostly show that consumer protection can be implemented to its full extent only through proper awareness by the consumer with regard to their rights as well as their responsibilities. It is seen that all the parties like the consumer, the government and consumer organizations, consumers club etc must work hand in hand in order to accomplish the goals of consumer awareness and consumer protection. Moreover we can see that most of the studies show a remarkable resemblance in their findings that awareness of the consumer is depleted due to lack of proper dissemination of information and facts regarding consumer issues which is a result of the low awareness level of consumers. There is also a serious research gap with regard to consumer protection in the state of Mizoram. With regard to Mizoram the research undertaken was only in the city of Aizawl and that too, the sample population was confined to a limited number of less than 50 people. The research undertaken was concentrated in the area of daily household goods in particular and was

not meant for the whole consumer community in general. So we can see that the research is of limited number when it comes to Mizoram and that if we consider the town of Lunglei in particular, there is no research undertaken till date with regards to the topic of consumer awareness as a whole and even consumer awareness among the youth in particular. The present study is expected to fill up this gap.

### **Statement of the problem:**

Consumer protection through consumer awareness needs a more flexible approach to deal with the challenges of the present day world. Awareness of consumer rights is missing especially in the rural areas and there is a need to generate awareness of consumer rights from the school level (Kumar, 2011). Most consumers are ill-informed, uneducated and disorganised. The fact is that the consumer of today is not as free as he is supposed to be. The consumer is influenced by aggressive advertisements, and conflicting claims, bright promises, fancy packings, soaring words and almost impenetrable ignorance. The flash of the product leads to impulsive buying of the consumer. The consumers rarely uses their cognitive ability to judge the pros and cons of the product. Limited protection to consumer interests under public enterprises has also lead to exploitation of the consumers. Widespread ignorance and fussy alertness is an off-shoot of backward Indian social and economic complexity. There is lack of feeling of responsibility by educated people to bring all kind of consumer's exploitation to the notice of press and concerned authority. The Mizo society is tolerant, passive and largely patient. As a result, for any mishap people do not like to take resort to provisions which can compensate their loss. Education of the people needs to be implemented in such a way that there is empowerment of the people relating to consumerism. Educational institutions can play vital roles in developing consumer awareness among the public in general and the students in particular. Mizoram has the advantage of more literate population in comparison to other states. According to 2011

Census, the state has 91.58% literacy rate. With such a high literacy rate, it is still seen that consumer awareness is very low.

The study focuses on the negligence of consumer awareness amongst consumers, especially among the youth between 15 to 24 years of age. Aged somewhere between 15 and 24, this generation is a by-product of an incredible sociological change brought about by 20 years of liberalization. It is worthwhile to know that in a nation like India, half the population is aged below 24 years. It is in this context the present study is aimed at understanding the awareness level of the youth in Lunglei town with regard to consumer protection.

## **Objectives**

The following are the objectives of the present study:

1. To examine the consumer protection measures offered by government and non-government organisations available in Mizoram.
2. To study the degree of awareness of consumer protection among the youth in Lunglei town.
3. To suggest appropriate measures to increase awareness of consumer protection.

### **Research Methodology:**

The research is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Lunglei district is the largest district in Mizoram in terms of geographical area with an area of 4538 sq. kms. Lunglei is the largest town in the district and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest town in terms of population next to the state capital, Aizawl. It is also worthwhile to notice that out of 173 branch members presently found in the Mizoram Consumers' Union, there are only 13 branch members in the whole of Lunglei district. Thus we can see the possibility that there might be a chance for weak awareness of consumerism in the area. So the study is conducted in Lunglei town.

### **Sampling**

The study focuses on young generation living in the select area. To make the design simple and comparable, respondent of the age group 15-24 as per definition given by United Nations General Assembly and World Bank only are selected. Lunglei town is divided into 23 village councils. The study randomly selects 10 village councils based on lottery system. 20 respondents from each selected village council are selected using purposive sampling method. While selecting the respondents, due care is taken to insure proper representation of important socio-economic groups like family income, educational level, profession etc. Apart from the structured schedule, primary data is also collected from observation and interaction with the correspondents when the schedule was administered.

The respondents were 10 matric passed, 166 undergraduates, 21 graduates and 3 postgraduates ranging in age from 15 to 24, approximately half of whom were female.

The respondents were asked a series of questions from the schedule. The main point of the schedule was to find out how much the subject was aware of his/her consumer rights and the legal perspectives and other aspects that are related to consumer rights and also his involvement in taking up the responsibilities as a consumer. The schedule also act as a guide for further in depth interaction with the subjects to uncover various knowledgeable perceptions of the subjects.

### **Data collection and analysis**

The present study uses primary as well as secondary data. Secondary data is collected from publications form various journals, books, research reports and other publications from government and non-government sources. The primary data is collected through a structured schedule as well as from observations and informal interviews.

The data so collected is processed with appropriate statistical tools like chi square test, Yates correction and percentiles. To present the datas, tables and pie diagrams are utilised.

## **Chapter Plan**

The present study is organized into the following chapters

1. Introduction
2. Consumer Protection in Mizoram
3. Awareness of Consumer Protection among Youth in Lunglei
4. Conclusions and Suggestions

Bibliography

Annexure



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## **Chapter 2: Consumer Protection in Mizoram**

### **2.1: Legal Perspectives and Conceptual Issues of Consumer Protection**

In order to protect the interests/rights of consumer in India, several arrangements are made. For the purpose of safety of the consumers and their satisfaction, the Indian Government made provision to make available the standardized certified and graded products by the producers/manufacturers. Such provision develops confidence among the consumers and save them from undue inconvenience. The provision of ISI trademark is meant for the industrial products and Ag-mark for the agricultural products. In the same way PAC Mark for building material and technology products, ECO Mark for toilet, soap, paper, detergent etc and FPO Marks for food products which can be adulterated. For the redressal of grievances of the consumers there is provision of Consumer Forum in every district of India. At the state level there is State level Consumer Forum and at the National level there is National Consumers Council. For the development of consumer awareness and education among the public the National level organization of Consumers' Education and Research is established in Ahmedabad.

During the past decade the consumer movement has spread and had grown dramatically all over the world. The end of the cold war and liberalization of economies have given way to more democratic governance, increased availability of products and services, as well as in many cases increased the vulnerability and insecurity of consumers. Consumers have therefore felt a much greater need to organize themselves

to come together to seek, to influence and determine their own, their families' and their communities' ability to have what they need to exist and to secure proper justice and fairness in the way they are governed and supplied. Citizens are increasingly realizing the power they have as consumers- as active participants in policy-making and pushing factors for social and economic change. Governments and development agencies are becoming aware that by empowering people as consumers they are making important contributions to human social development and supporting effective, efficient and competitive market.

## **2.2: Who a consumer is:**

All of the human beings are consumers of goods and services. For the purpose of the Consumer Protection Act, the word "Consumer" is defined separately for "goods" and "services".

(A)For the purpose of 'goods', a consumer means a person belonging to the following categories:

~ One who buys or agrees to buy any goods for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partially paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment.

~it includes any user of such goods other than the person who actually buys goods and such use is made with the approval of the purchaser.

(B)For the purpose of 'services', a consumer means a person belonging to the following categories:

~ one who hires or avails of any service or services for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment.

~ it includes any beneficiary of such service other than the one who actually hires or avails of the service for consideration and such services are availed with the approval of such person

### **2.3: What a Consumer Complaint is:**

Under the Consumer Protection Act, a complaint means any allegation in writing made by a complainant in regard to one or more of the following:-

~ Any unfair trade practice as defined in the Act or restrictive trade practices like tie-up sales adopted by any trader.

~ One or more defects in goods. The goods hazardous to life and safety, when used, are being offered for sale to public in contravention of provisions of any law for the time being in force.

~ Deficiencies in services

~ A trader charging excess of price.

1. Fixed by or under any law for the time being in force; or

2. Displayed on goods; or

3. Displayed on any packets containing such goods.

Procedure for filing complaints and seeking redressal are simple. There is no fee for filing complaint before the District Forum, the State Commission or the National



Commission. Three to five copies of the complaint on plain paper depending on the number of opposite parties are required to be filed.

#### **2.4: Jurisdiction:**

~ If the cost of goods or services and compensation asked for is, up to rupees 5 lakh, then the complaint can be filed in the District Forum which has been notified by the State Government for the district where the cause of the action has arisen or where the opposite party resides. A complaint can also be filed at a place where the branch office of the opposite party is located.

~ If the cost of goods or services and compensation asked for is more than rupees 5 lakh, but less than rupees twenty lakh, then the complaint can be filed before the State Commission, notified by the State Government or Union Territory concerned where the cause of the action has arisen or where the opposite party resides. A complaint can also be filed at a place where the branch office of the opposite party is located.

~ If the cost of goods or services and compensation asked for exceeds rupees 20 lakhs, then the complaint can be filed in the National Commission at New Delhi.

#### **2.5: Reliefs available to Consumers:**

Depending on the facts and circumstances, the Redressals Forums may give order for one or more of the following relief.

~ Removal of defects from the goods;

~ Replacement of the goods;

~ Refund of the price paid:

- ~ Award of compensation for the loss of injury suffered;
- ~ Removal of defects or deficiencies in the services;
- ~ Discontinuance of unfair trade practices or restrictive trade practices or direction not to repeat them;
- ~ Withdrawal of the hazardous goods from being offered to sale; or
- ~ Award for adequate costs to parties

## **2.6: Consumer Rights**

The late President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, on March 15, 1962 had approved the Consumer Rights displayed by the US Congress. In recognition of this, from 1983, World Consumer Rights Day is held every day on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. The basic rights approved were:

**The Right to Safety** – to be protected against the marketing of goods which are hazardous to health or life.

**The Right to be Informed** – to be protected against fraudulent, deceitful, or grossly misleading information, advertising, labeling or other practices, and to be given the facts the consumer needs to make an informed choice.

**The Right to Choose** – to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of products and services at competitive prices and in which competition is not workable and government regulation is substituted, as assurance of satisfactory quality ad service at fair prices.

**The Right to be Heard** – to be assured that the consumer's interest will receive full and sympathetic consideration in the formulation of government policy, and expeditious treatment in its administrative tribunals.

Apart from these there are two more rights of consumer which are

**Right to seek redressal** – to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers.

**Right to Consumer Education** – to acquire knowledge and skill, to be an informed consumer throughout life.

### **2.7: International Movements in Consumer Protection:**

Under consumerism the buyer wants improvement in quality of products and introductions of fair marketing practices in order to increase the span of life. The consumerists advocate that the world resources are limited, therefore, social values, must be respected to promote peace and harmony between the seller on the one hand and the buyer on the other hand. The consumer protection has attained enormous international dimensions due to increase in international trade and commerce. The production, distribution and promotion of goods and services by multinational companies have raised various issues.

Following the establishment of the International Organisation of Consumers Union (IOCU) in 1960 [now known as Consumers International (CI)] – the movement extended into Asia, Latin America, and Africa in the 1970s and 1980s.

Specifically the consumer movement contributes to development and strengthening of civil society through:

- a. Eradicating Poverty
- b. Social justice and respect for human rights
- c. Fair and effective market economies
- d. Contributing to Good Governance and Democracy
- e. Encouraging Sustainable development and Consumption

Consumers International heavily influenced the United Nations and its agencies from the early 1960s. Consumers International has official representation on many global bodies, including United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC ) and related United Nations agencies and commissions, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In 1985 the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection were officially adopted by the UN General Assembly, serving as a vital lobbying tool both nationally and internationally.

## **2.8: UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection**

On April 9, 1985 the UN General Assembly with due negotiations in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), adopted by consensus a set of guidelines on Consumer Protection. These guidelines provided a framework to strengthen policy and legislation to protect consumers and also promote international co-operation in this field. These guidelines include provisions on

- a) Physical safety of consumers
- b) Protection of economic interests of consumers

- c) Consumers access to information needed to make informed choices
- d) Measures enabling consumers to obtain proper redress
- e) International co-operation in the field of consumer protection

An analysis of the objectives of the guidelines and the specifications make clear that there should be concrete consumer protection policies in each country to be adopted after due consideration of the relevant factors applying modern research techniques. Promotion of sustainable consumption patterns is a very vital issue. Adoption of any policy above that should take note of the need to eradicate pervading poverty, fulfillment of basic human needs of all members of the society and reducing inequality within and between countries. There should be adequate infrastructure to develop, implement and monitor these policies. Relevant laws and regulations should also be framed and followed by all the enterprises, nationals and internationals, conforming to the international standards because of any appropriate policies or measures would necessarily include a consumer friendly legal system.

Thus, the legal system of a country should, besides taking a not so general consumer safety and advancement of economic interest of the consumers, adopt standards for quality of consumer goods and services and distribution thereof. Consumer education should be an integral part of the basic curriculum of the education system imparting sufficient knowledge about health, nutrition, food adulteration,, prevention of food borne diseases, product hazards, labeling, weights and measures, prices etc. The important measures which empower consumers are right to information, education, representation and redressal. Any legislation, directly or indirectly related to consumer protection, should take due notes of these rights.

In view of the effectiveness of programmes at the international level, many international organizations have been actively contributing towards developing consumer cooperation. The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) has made contributions with regard to the safety of consumers. In the area of food, UNICEF has done appreciable work. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) promotes the interests of workers, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) pursues special programmes of similar objectives from agricultural products. The expert committee of the WHO is also active for the protection of consumers. The Third Adhoc Group of Experts on Restrictive Business Practices of UNCTAD identified certain restrictive business practices, affecting consumers, including fixation of prices, resale price, maintenance, refusal to sell and after sale service.

## **2.9: Consumerism in India**

A large part of our laws have been derived from English Common laws and their Court decisions. Before liberalization, India was following a policy of protectionism. Due to inter-play of multitude of socio-economic prevailing at that time, it was a seller's market. The consumers were less informed and not in a position to protect themselves by exerting an influence on producers and distributors. "The problems of consumers were accentuated because of industrial and commercial complexities: monopoly trade practices, giving a distorted and misleading picture of the consumer goods. Despite the economic development and diversification for the product market, the position of the consumer has been weakened. The concept of consumer's sovereignty remains a myth and the consumers do not have an effective voice in the present marketing setup.

“(Singh 1985). Such a situation has to be corrected. In November 1984, the Indian government relaxed certain regulations governing the industrial sector. The Indian companies were allowed to tie up with foreign companies. The consumer market expanded and it also saw a remarkable growth in the production and consumption of electronic products, especially computers. Yet the imbalance between producers and consumers continued, the existing laws were general laws and did not contain specific provisions for remedying this fundamental disorder. This called for urgent corrective steps to promote healthy economic order.

In India, with respect to consumer protection, the phenomenal change and relevant legal developments have taken place more or less in the English pattern. Internationally, with the growth and strengthening of consumer movement era, of special laws and mechanisms in the area began in the 1980s. In 1980, the UN Secretary General also emphasized for the development of consumer protection policies. India being a constituent member of the United Nations and in an effort to be in tune with global phenomenon of legislative era of special laws, developed the consumer protection laws on the same lines that of UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, 1985, as elsewhere in the world. Thus the Consumer Protection Act 1986 was enacted. Report of the Madhya Pradesh Consumer Protection Bill, 1984, which was opposed by FICCI, clearly states the central point of the measures:

“ If the basic rights are assured to the consumers then it will certainly help them to raise their standard of living and they will appreciate and accept the concept of consumerism, which is defined as a social movement intended to safeguard the interest of buyer through various social control measures. This will create a consciousness in the society,

which would generate a new force to reject the rule of caveat emptor (let the buyer beware) and pave the way for the acceptance of the theory of caveat venditor (let the seller beware) in the larger interest of co-ordinated economic growth. In this point of view, it is necessary to evolve a comprehensive consumer code in order to suggest structural base and to rejuvenate the faith of common in the efficacy of laws and its instrumentalities". (FICCI expressed that it is doubtful whether the state is ripe for this type of legislation considering its poverty level and relative backwardness of its economy). (Madhya Pradesh Consumer Protection Bill, 1984,)

With India being a member of World Trade Organisation, the Uruguay Conference in 1986, India committed itself to gradually bring in trade reforms and encourage cross border trading. The liberalization in 1991 opened the floodgates for multinational companies to set up their shops in India. Liberalisation of Indian economy ushered the country into a sustainable industrial growth. From a GDP 3-4% during 1980s the Indian economy grows by 8.8% in the financial year 2010-11. The consumer spending during 1993-98 was on a high growth trajectory. Between 1996-97 and 2002-01, per capita income on an aggregate basis grew by a compounded annual rate of 3.2% High-income households grew much faster-by about 20%. Upper middle class income households grew by 10% on a compounded annual growth basis during the period. In 2001 there are a 100 million, 15 – 24 years old in India, and six out of ten households have this age group generation. ( The Quarterly Journal of Economics 2004). India as a consumer now has a concretely imagine a better life There is the great Indian Middle Class boom which has given the consumption push. India as a consumer



has become more striving to a better life with the plurality of income having increased. Increase in education has also significantly changed the consumer behavior in India.

A combination of new technologies and the globalization of the economy have posed new challenges to the national legal system. Better investor protection implies protection into a better risk sharing. Because of entrepreneurs' risk aversion, this results in a larger demand of capital. This is the demand effect. Studies have proved that the investor protection on growth is stronger for countries with lower restrictions. Cross-country data provide support for this prediction. Consumer protection laws enable the correction of market failures and the redress of inequalities of information and power. Thus there felt a need to revisit the existing consumer protection laws in India.

The delay in disposal of cases by the Redressal agencies at the District, State and National level has been a cause of major concern. A Writ Petition under Article 32 moved for a direction to the appropriate Government for urgent implementation of the provisions of the Act and the subsequent directions issued by the Supreme Court in this regard accelerated the amendment process, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution was created by the Union Government and so was by the State Government. The Act was amended in the year 1991, 1993 and 2002 to make it more effective and purposeful. The amendments are mainly aimed at facilitating quicker disposal of the complaints, enhancing the capability of Redressal agencies, strengthening them with more functional and effectiveness.

Consumer welfare is correctly placed on the government agenda in February, 2004. The Department of Consumer Affairs has set up six working groups to look into different areas of consumer welfare in order to protect the consumer interests. This has

been done on the initiation of the Central Consumer Protection Council. The different Working Groups are on food safety, misleading advertisements, drugs, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, consumer health and safety concerning tobacco products and a group to formulate new acts or amend the existing one.

With respect to e-commerce in India, the Information Technology Act 2000 falls short of satisfying the basic need of e-commerce. The advocates of Consumer Protection in India have called for the IT Act 2000 be suitably amended in the near future to make it little consumer friendly. It may be noted that the definition of ‘Complaint’ now includes ‘trader as well as service providers after the 2002 amendment in Consumer Protection Act 1986. { The Consumer Protection (Third Amendment) Rules 2006}

The Department of Consumer Affairs has constituted a Committee for framing the National Consumer Policy that will detail and reinforce the rights of the consumer and the corresponding penalties of erring companies besides coining an entirely new system to ensure speedy disposal of cases. The broad terms of reference of the committee would be to examine all issues with the guidelines for consumer protection adopted by the United Nations in 1985.

## **2.10: Consumer Organisations in Mizoram**

The consumer organizations are the important and effective institutions that rendered their services for consumer awareness and safeguard of the rights of the consumers. It is these organizations that the consumers feel free to express their dismay about what they consume. These organizations act as platforms for the consumers to amplify their voice to express their views and to make effective progress so that their complaints maybe looked into and that they will have satisfactions from their problems that they seek for redressal. NGOs are also active these days to improve awareness and safeguard the interest of consumers. On behalf of the consumers the NGOs are lodging the complaint against the manufactures, producers, retailers, service-providers in different Consumer Forums and court of Law in order to protect the interest of consumers and give them due compensation. Print and Electronic media are also active in infusing awareness among the consumers. The journal 'VOICE' is highlighting the problems of consumers and its remedial measures. For creating awareness among the consumers, Ministry of Consumers Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India arranged the awareness programme in the electronic media. The programme 'Jago Grahak Jago' in All India Radio by the Ministry is also an important one for the improvement of alertness and awareness among the consumers, especially rural consumers. The service-providers have also established customer care centre for redressal of grievences of the consumers. Most of the service-providers have also installed Toll-Free phone numbers in order to facilitate the redressal of complaints of customers.

Though the government of Mizoram is giving great concern for the welfare of the consumers, yet the consumers constitute the most neglected class in our economy, they have been subjected to much hardship due to spiraling prices even in essential commodities like food grains, sugar, milk, edible oil etc. A very significant role is being played by consumer organizations in Mizoram in protecting the consumers. Consumer organisations in Mizoram helped the consumers to file petitions in courts or undertook other activities to safeguard their interests. The experiences of the consumer organizations in Mizoram were necessary for resolution of complains and improving the consumer welfare in the districts of Mizoram. Consumer organizations were aware of various standards available for product rating/testing and pricing. Consumer Organisations in Mizoram are playing significant role in providing protection to the consumer against the unethical activities of the businessmen. They also contribute to enhancing consumer satisfaction. Consumer organizations have made a deep impact and a stepping stone in the history of consumer protection in the state of Mizoram. The consumer organisations are resisting the unscrupulous dealings of businessmen and ensuring justice to consumers in consumption function. They are engaged in performing various activities like consumer awareness and education, product appraisal , protection of consumer rights, handle consumer complaints and redress their grievances and carry out research. They also act as a mouth piece of the consumers. Consumer organizations deploy various activities for consumer education such as seminars, conferences, workshops, public meetings, counseling demonstration, exhibitions wherein they interacted with consumers in groups. The main focus for the consumer organizations in these consumer educations was to enhance consumer

awareness regarding redressal of complains, for the consumers to know their rights and to know the harmful effects of products. With regard to product rating, pricing and testing of product, consumer organisations in Mizoram are playing important role. The establishment of standards for popular products and other acceptable products is the main criterion for these activities. However, consumer organizations are finding that the consumers utilized this information only to a limited extent.

When the Consumer Protection Act 1986 was enacted, every states in the country established Consumer Courts, i.e. State Commission and District Forums. In Mizoram, the government established the State Commission and Aizawl District Forum in 1987. However, since the people are yet to know the importance of these courts, these courts were not utilized to their full potentials. But at the same time, there arise the awareness of consumer rights and the need to safeguard the consumers rights, and as such stepping stones were created by a few fanatics. Since 1990, there was a giant awakening in the awareness of consumer and its scenario, and various consumer organizations and associations were formed in Mizoram. Mizoram Telephone Subscribers Union was formed in July 1990, Mizoram Electric Consumer Association in March 1993, Mizoram Gas Consumers' Union in April 1995 and Mizoram Cable TV Subscribers Union in November 1995. These organizations in their own ways paved the way for consumer awareness and the rights of the consumers in their own respective fields. They were the voice of the consumers, and are also giving valuable advice to the government as and when necessary. These organizations were very helpful for consumers as they have played prominent role as guide to consumers and assist them in every ways possible with regards to the rules, acts and orders which are available for

consumers. It was the belief of these organizations that if they pool their resources and share their experiences with one another and merged themselves into a single organization in stead of being many small and numerous tiny organizations, their objectives would be easier to achieve and that they would be more effective. To take up the initiative, Mizoram Gas Cosumers' Union was given the role of convener. Speedy actions were taken, and the draft for the constitution of the organization was undertaken. Thus Mizoram Consumer Union was formed and the first General Meeting was held on 29.08.1997.(The Constitution of MCU 2005) However a new registration for the organization was not made and the registration of Mizoram Gas Consumers' Union was used. This was mainly due to benefits which the firm can gain from their seniority of Firm & Society Registration which from they can obtain Grant-in-Aid from both the State and the Central government. As time goes by, the MCU was affiliated under Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Mumbai. Consumer organizations emerged in various districts of Mizoram with their own separate registrations. But for the smooth functioning and to attain their aims and objectives, these organizations affiliated themselves to the MCU.

Till date, there are seven district level consumer organizations affiliated to MCU, there are around 170 branch members of MCU a well.

With regards to the youth, there are many consumer clubs in the college level and in both the high school and higher secondary school level. In Aizawl district, there are 37 consumer clubs while in Lunglei there are 21 consumer clubs. 16 consumer club are there in Champhai district, while Serchhip district, Lawngtlai district, Kolasib district and Saiha district have 15, 6, 11 and 4 consumer club respectively. There are

340 branches or villages in Mizoram which are affiliated to MCU. The list of district level consumer organizations, branch members, consumer clubs and name of villages affiliated to MCU with their affiliation date are given.

**Table 2.1: DISTRICT LEVEL CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATION**

Sl No	Name of Organisation & District	Year of Affiliation
1	Serchhip District Consumer Association, Serchhip	05.04.1999
2	Kolasib District Consumer Association, Kolasib	08.05.1999
3	Champhai District Consumer Association, Champhai	01.08.1999
4	Saiha District Consumer Association, Saiha	03.09.1999
5	Lawngtlai District Consumer Association, Lawngtlai	01.02.2000
6	Lunglei District Consumer Association, Lunglei	22.03.2000
7	Mamit District Consumer Association, Mamit	05.06.2005
6	Saiha District Consumer Association, Saiha	03.09.1999

**Table 2.2: LIST OF BRANCH MEMBERS OF MIZORAM CONSUMER UNION**

Sl No	Name of Branch/Village	Date of Estd/Affiliation	District
1	Aibawk	21.04.03	Aizawl
2	Ailawng	11.05.03	Mamit
3	Armed Veng	18.01.02	Aizawl

4	Armed Veng South	24.08.99	Aizawl
5	Baktawng Tlangnuam	22.08.05	Serchhip
6	Bawngkawn	25.03.96	Aizawl
7	BAwngkawn Chhimveng	13.02.06	Serchhip
8	Bawngthah	16.11.03	Mamit
9	Bazar Veng, Lunglei	13.09.02	Lunglei
10	Bethlehem	12.03.96	Aizawl
11	Bethlehem Vengthlang	24.02.98	Aizawl
12	Biate	02.06.04	Champhai
13	Bualpui 'NG'	01.08.09	Lawngtlai
14	Buarpui	16.09.01	Lunglei
15	Buhban	03.11.06	Aizawl
16	Bukpui North	20.01.00	Kolasib
17	Bungkawn	12.04.96	Aizawl
18	Bungkawn Nursery Veng	03.06.97	Aizawl
19	Central Jail Veng	11.11.97	Aizawl
20	Chaltlang	21.09.97	Aizawl
21	Chanmari West	24.10.97	Aizawl
22	Chaawlhmun	09.07.94	Aizawl
23	Chawngte (L)	08.09.05	Lunglei
24	Chawnpui	24.04.04	Aizawl
25	Chhawrtui	15.03.04	Champhai
26	lChhiahtlang	31.03.05	Serchhip



27	Chhinga Veng	12.02.04	Aizawl
28	Chhingchhip	28.09.03	Serchhip
29	Chhipphir	25.05.06	Lunglei
30	Chhippui	09.03.04	Mamit
31	Chhippui (Kawnmawi Veng)	04.08.08	Mamit
32	College Veng	15.02.01	Aizawl
33	Dam Veng	31.10.97	Aizawl
34	Darlawn	31.10.02	Aizawl
35	Darlung	02.02.04	Mamit
36	Dawrpui	04.04.05	Aizawl
37	Dawrpui Vvengthar	24.01.96	Aizawl
38	Dilkawn	20.07.06	Champhai
39	Dinthar	02.10.97	Aizawl
40	Dinthar, West Phaileng	23.09.06	Mamit
41	Durtlang	25.02.99	Aizawl
42	Durtlang Leitan	05.02.95	Aizawl
43	Durtlang Vengthar	30.04.98	Aizawl
44	East Lungdar	14.01.03	Aizawl
45	East Phaileng	13.06.08	Aizawl
46	Edenthar	07.06.97	Aizawl
47	Electric Veng	11.08.02	Aizawl
48	Falkawn	22.08.10	Aizawl
49	Govt. Complex	12.07.96	Aizawl

50	Haulawng	25.08.02	Lunglei
51	Hliappui	09.06.08	Champhai
52	Hmuntha	15.10.05	Champhai
53	Hnahthial	01.09.98	Lunglei
54	Hortoki	07.02.04	Mamit
55	Hualngohmun	08.10.02	Aizawl
56	Hunthar	12.09.97	Aizawl
57	ITI	20.02.05	Aizawl
58	Kanan	25.03.96	Aizawl
59	Kanghmun	09.09.99	Mamit
60	Kawlkulh	13.07.06	Champhai
61	Kawrtethawveng	23.04.06	Mamit
62	Kawrthah	03.01.03	Mamit
63	Keifang	01.10.02	Aizawl
64	Kelsih	02.12.07	Aizawl
65	Khamrang	04.04.03	Kolasib
66	Khatla	14.04.96	Aizawl
67	Khatla South	06.10.97	Aizawl
68	Khatla South	06.10.97	Aizawl
69	Khawbung South	21.09.02	Serchhip
70	Khawlailung	19.09.07	Serchhip
71	Khawruhlian	08.10.10	Aizawl
72	Khawzawl	05.02.97	Champhai

73	Khumtung	10.07.08	Serchhip
74	Kulikawn	24.09.97	Aizawl
75	Laipuitlang	07.10.97	Aizawl
76	Lallen	12.08.06	Mamit
77	Leite	08.02.09	Lunglei
78	Leng	15.01.97	Serchhip
79	Lengpui	19.11.00	Aizawl
80	Luangmual Vengthar	19.09.97	Aizawl
81	Lungchhuan	10.02.08	Serchhip
82	Lungdai	05.02.01	Kolasib
83	Lungmuat	20.06.05	Kolasib
84	Lungphun	08.06.04	Mamit
85	Marpara South	20.05.07	Lunglei
86	Maubawk	02.02.95	Aizawl
87	Maubuang	14.06.09	Aizawl
88	Melthum	12.10.97	Aizawl
89	Mimbung	17.05.02	Champhai
90	Mission Veng	27.03.09	Aizawl
91	Mission Veng North	18.01.97	Aizawl
92	Mission Vengthlang	15.06.95	Aizawl
93	Model Veng	20.09.97	Aizawl
94	Mualcheng	21.01.01	Serchhip
95	Muallungthu	31.03.06	Aizawl

96	Murlen	01.03.06	Champhai
97	Muthi	20.10.97	Aizawl
98	New Ngharchhip	23.07.05	Serchhip
99	Ngopa	02.02.04	Champhai
100	North East Khawdungsei	10.11.06	Champhai
101	North Mualcheng	21.01.01	Serchhip
102	North Vanlaiphai	04.05.03	Serchhip
103	Pangzawl	01.09.98	Lunglei
104	Phullen	12.10.96	Aizawl
105	Phulpui	18.04.04	Aizawl
106	Phunchawng	24.05.05	Aizawl
107	Piler	11.04.10	Serchhip
108	Ramhlun North	15.01.95	Aizawl
109	Ramhlun South	15.05.97	Aizawl
110	Ramhlun Venglai	23.04.98	Aizawl
111	Ramhlun Vengthar	01.03.99	Aizawl
112	Ramthar Veng	08.10.97	Aizawl
113	Rangvamual	16.09.97	Aizawl
114	Reiek	18.03.08	Mamit
115	Rengdil	15.04.06	Mamit
116	Thingdawl	26.05.95	Aizawl
117	Rulchawm	08.09.03	Aizawl
118	Sailam	08.08.04	Aizawl

119	Sailulak	02.02.02	Serchhip
120	Sairang	22.06.99	Aizawl
121	Saithah	03.08.06	Mamit
122	Saitual	27.03.02	Aizawl
123	Samlukhai	01.12.03	Aizawl
124	Samthang	17.10.02	Champhai
125	Sateek	27.07.10	Aizawl
126	Selesih	03.09.03	Aizawl
127	Seling	13.09.06	Aizawl
128	Serkawn	12.04.01	Lunglei
129	Sialhawk	21.09.07	Champhai
130	Sialsuk	06.07.03	Aizawl
131	Sihphir	05.03.96	Aizawl
132	Sihphir Vengthar	12.01.03	Aizawl
133	South Hlimen	22.09.97	Aizawl
134	Suangpuilawn	03.06.08	Aizawl
135	Sumsuih	01.12.04	Aizawl
136	Tachhip	05.11.06	Aizawl
137	Tanhril	05.08.96	Aizawl
138	Thakthing	02.03.96	Aizawl
139	Thenzawl	05.11.02	Serchhip
140	Thingdawl	21.04.01	Kolasib
141	Thingdawl	25.07.06	Kolasib

142	Thingsai	17.04.01	Lunglei
143	Thingsulthliah	30.03.06	Aizawl
144	Thuampui, Aizawl	03.10.02	Aizawl
145	Tlabung	01.04.01	Lunglei
146	Tlangnuam	17.09.97	Aizawl
147	Tlungvel	01.09.99	Aizawl
148	Tualbung	05.10.03	Aizawl
149	Tuikhuahtlang	28.09.97	Aizawl
150	Tuikual North	25.09.96	Aizawl
151	Tuithiang	15.08.96	Aizawl
152	Tuivamit	01.06.05	Aizawl
153	Upper Republic	03.04.98	Aizawl
154	Vairengte	14.01.04	Kolasib
155	Vaivakawn	16.03.96	Aizawl
156	Vamchengpui	03.03.02	Serchhip
157	Venghluui	05.12.95	Aizawl
158	Venghnuai	25.09.97	Aizawl
159	Venglai	03.03.99	Aizawl
160	West Phaileng	10.01.03	Mamit
161	Zawlnuam	01.09.02	Mamit
162	Zawlsei	27.05.02	Champhai
163	Zemabawk	07.04.95	Aizawl
164	Zohmun	03.06.04	Aizawl

165	Zonuam	19.09.97	Aizawl
166	Zote South	28.09.07	Serchhip
167	Zotlang	07.10.97	Aizawl
168	Zotlang (Lunglei)	14.02.05	Lunglei
169	Zuangtui	02.10.97	Aizawl
170	Zuchhip (Khawzawl)	27.01.03	Champhai

**Table 2.3: LIST OF CONSUMER CLUBS AFFILIATED TO MIZORAM CONSUMERS' UNION**

1. Aizawl District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation
1	Consumer club, Govt. JL Higher Secondary School, Khatla, Aizawl	24.12.05
2	Consumer club, T. Romana College, Republic Veng, Aizawl	18.11.05
3	Consumer club, Govt. MIzo Higher Secondary School, Zarkawt, Aizawl	04.05.06
4	Consumer club, Republic Higher Secondary School, Ramthar, Aizawl	12.05.06
5	Consumer club, Mizoram Institute of Comprehensive Education, Venghlui, Aizawl	12..04.05
6	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Sakawrtuichhun, Aizawl	01.08.05
7	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Sihphir	17.05.06

8	Consumer club, Govt. Mamawii Higher Secondary School, Model Veng, Aizawl	08.07.05
9	Consumer club, Govt. Sumsuih High School, Sumsuih	25.05.06
10	Consumer club, Govt. Tuisualral High School, Sakawrdai	30.05.06
11	Consumer club, Govt. Sawleng High School, sawleng	29.05.06
12	Consumer club, Govt. Zirtiri Residential Science College, Ramthar Veng, Aizawl	10.02.06
13	Consumer club, Govt. Darlawn High School, Darlawn	05.12.05
14	Consumer club, Modern English Higher Secondary School, Dawrpui,	22.03.05
15	Consumer club, St. Paul's Higher Secondary School, Tlangnuam, Aizawl	01.06.06
16	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Bungkawn, Aizawl	16.06.06
17	Consumer club, Govt. KM Higher Secondary School, Dawrpui Vengthar, Aizawl	20.06.06
18	Consumer club, Chawnpui High School, Chawnpui Veng, Aizawl	30.05.06
19	Consumer club, Helen Lowry Higher Secondary School, Seventhday Tlang, Aizawl	30.06.05
20	Consumer club, Govt. Ch. Chhunga High School, Luangmual, Aizawl	20.06.06
21	Consumer club, Govt. Chaltlang Higher Secondary School, Chaltlang, Aizawl	30.05.06
22	Consumer club, Govt. Central Higher Secondary School, College	17.11.05



	Veng, Aizawl	
23	Consumer club, Govt. Aizawl College, Mission Veng, Aizawl	03..10.06
24	Consumer club, Ailawng, High School, Ailawng	05.06.06
25	Consumer club, Govt. Comprehensive High School, Keifang	30.05.07
26	Consumer club, Ramhlun Vengthar High School, Ramhlun Vengthar, Aizawl	16.04.05
27	Consumer club, Chawlhmun, High School, Chawlhmun, Aizawl	29.09.07
28	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Samlukhai	12.03.07
29	Consumer club, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Saitual	01.10.07
30	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Lengpui	12.12.07
31	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Sairang	08.02.08
32	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Suangpulaawn	05.03.08
33	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Zemabawk, Aizawl	12.03.08
34	Consumer club, Govt. Hlimen High School, Hlimen	17.03.08
35	Consumer club, Govt. Sateek High School, Sateek	16.03.08
36	Consumer club, Govt. KVM High School, Chhinga Veng, Aizawl	10.02.08
37	Consumer club, Zotlag High School, Zotlang, Aizawl	03.04.09

## 2. Lunglei District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation
1	Consumer club, Govt. Venglai High School, Lunglei	28.10.05
2	Consumer club, Govt, Zohnuai High School, Lunglei	22.03.06
3	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Mualthuam	23.03.06
4	Consumer club, Theiriat Govt. High School, Theiriat	23.03.06
5	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Cherhlun	27.10.05
6	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Pangzawl	27.03.06
7	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Thingsai	28.10.05
8	Consumer club, Govt. Bazar High School, Lunglei	21.03.06
9	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Tlabung	11.11.05
10	Consumer club, Govt. High School, South Vanlaiphai	14.03.06
11	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Lungsen	03.04.06
12	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Zotlang	18.04.06
13	Consumer club, Govt. Liantawna High School, Lunglawn	25.04.06
14	Consumer club, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Lunglei	25.01.07
15	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Buarpui	03.07.07
16	Consumer club, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Hnahthial	18.03.06
17	Consumer club, Govt. Tawipui North High School, Tawiou North	03.08.07
18	Consumer club, Govt. Lunglei College, Lunglei	27.07.07
19	Consumer club, Govt. Sertlangpui High School, Sertlangpui	04.06.07
20	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Tawipui South	22.01.08
21	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Haulawng	14.05.10

### 3. Champhai District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation
1	Consumer club, Mimbung High School, Mimbung	30.03.06
2	Consumer club, Dulte High School, Dulte	20.03.06
3	Consumer club, Govt. R. Hrange High School, Champhai	23.03.06
4	Consumer club, Govt. Chhaktiang High School, Vaphai	06.03.06
5	Consumer club, Govt. High School Ngopa	26.10.05
6	Consumer club, Govt. Hliappui High School, Hliappui	01.05.06
7	Consumer club, Khawzawl Higher Secondary School, Khawzawl	21.10..05
8	Consumer club, Govt. Thangchuma High School, Farkawn	10.11.05
9	Consumer club, Govt. Teikhang High School, Teikhang	07.11.05
10	Consumer club, Govt. Vaphai Border Middle School	08.09.06
11	Consumer club, Govt. Middle School, Farkawn	11.09.06
12	Consumer club, Hmunhmeltha High School, Hmunhmeltha	28.11.05
13	Consumer club, Govt. Champhai High School, Champhai	21.06.07
14	Consumer club, Bethel High School, Champhai	20.06.07
15	Consumer club, Govt. Khawbung High School, Khawbung	02.05.07
16	Consumer club, Govt. G.M. Higher Secondary School, Champhai	14.09.07

#### 4. Mamit District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation
1	Consumer club, Govt. High School, West Phaileng	22.03.06
2	Consumer club, Govt. Rengdil High School, Rengdil	21.10.05
3	Consumer club, Kawrtethawveng High School, Kawrtethawveng	25.10.05
4	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Kanghmun	15.05.06
5	Consumer club, Govt. High School - 2, Mamit	01.06.07
6	Consumer club, Govt K. R. High School, Zawlnuam	06.06.07
7	Consumer club, Dampui High School, Dampui	20.06.07
8	Consumer club, Zawlnuam College, Zawlnuam	07.06.07
9	Consumer club, Govt. Borai High School	14.06.07
10	Consumer club, Govt. Khawrihnim High School, Khawrihnim	04.07.07
11	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Mamit	05.06.08
12	Consumer club, Ailawng High School, Ailawng	05.06.06
13	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Reiek	19.05.06
14	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Kanghmun	15.05.06

## 5. Serchhip District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation /estd.
1	Consumer club, Govt Chhiahtlang High School, Chhiahtlang	18.04.06
2	Consumer club, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Serchhip	18.04.06
3	Consumer club, Govt. Bungtlang High School, Bungtlang	19.05.06
4	Consumer club, Govt. Middle School, Thenzawl	26.05.06
5	Consumer club, Govt. P.C.R. High School, New Serchhip	16.12.05
6	Consumer club, Govt. Lalengvunga High School, Thenzawl	17.01.06
7	Consumer club, East Lungdar Higher Secondary School, East Lungdar	18.01.06
8	Consumer club, Govt. High School, North Vanlaiphai	01.07.06
9	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Chhingchhip	20.07.06
10	Consumer club, Govt. GM High School, Serchhip	25.08.06
11	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Keitum	01.05.06
12	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Thenzawl	03.02.06
13	Consumer club, Leng High School, Leng	29.01.07
14	Consumer club, Govt. Middle School, Leng	26.04.07
15	Consumer club, North Mualcheng High School, Mualcheng	05.03.08

#### 6. Lawngtlai District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation /estd.
1	Consumer club, Govt. Southern Public High School, Lawngtlai	14.06.07
2	Consumer club, Lawngtlai College, Lawngtlai	21.06.07
3	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Bualpui 'NG'	25.06.07
4	Consumer club, Govt. Blue Mountain, Sangau	22.06.07
5	Consumer club, Govt. Region Higher Secondary School, Lawngtlai	03.04.07
6	Consumer club, Govt. Kaladan High School, Paithar	05.09.07

#### 7. Kolasib District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation /estd.
1	Consumer club, Govt. High School, Thingdawl	24.03.06
2	Consumer club, Govt. T. Robert High School., Bilkhawthlir	24.05.06
3	Consumer club, Higher Secondary School, Kawnpui	01.08.06
4	Consumer club, New High School, Kawnpui	01.09.06
5	Consumer club, Hmarveng High School, Kolasib	02.09.06
6	Consumer club, Govt. Vairengte High School, Vairengte	13.07.07
7	Consumer club, Govt. Diakkawn High School, Kolasib	01.02.07
8	Consumer club, C.Zakhuma Higher Secondary School, Kolasib	19.06.07

9	Consumer club, Govt. Ch. K. High School, Bukpui	30.07.07
10	Consumer club, Green Hills High School, Kawnpui	25.07.07
11	Consumer club, Govt. Hortoki High School, Hortoki	22.03.06

#### 8. Saiha District

Sl. No.	Name of Consumer Club/ Educational Institution	Year of affiliation /estd.
1	Consumer club, Govt. Siaha High School, New Saiha	20.01.06
2	Consumer club, Govt. Higher Secondary School, Saiha	20.04.05
3	Consumer club, Govt, Saiha College, Saiha	03.07.07
4	Consumer club, ECM Higher Secondary School, Saiha	03.07.07

The consumer organizations in Mizoram have given a supportive role, especially among the youth and from the list given, it can be noticed that the youth who are in the educational institution are well versed in the area of consumer awareness as most of the educational institutions in the state are having consumer clubs. These consumer clubs served as the main area where the youth can develop their awareness of consumerism, and also these clubs are very important especially in the rural areas where there is much consumer abuse. Consumer organizations in Mizoram are having great impact especially among the youth due to the fact that they can play decisive role by moulding the behaviour of the consumer youth in the right direction. They have community base which can greatly enhanced their fight for making the consumer awareness movement a success. They have a vital role in organizing the consumers to fight their rights against

manipulations and extortions by manufactures and traders. They are the platform by which the consumers can speak out their remorse with full confidence.

Taking the town of Lunglei into consideration, we can see that there is a consumer club in most of the high schools and the higher secondary schools. But with regards to higher educational institutions, although there are three general colleges, two nursing colleges and two other vocational institutions, we can see that there is only one consumer club among the colleges. But overall, the general consumer awareness imparted by these consumers' club is quite helpful in procuring the needs of the society as well as the youth. It is seen that these consumer organizations and clubs in Lunglei are the main tools for promoting awareness among the people in Lunglei and they proved to be playing vital role in planting consumer awareness at the grass root level.



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### **CHAPTER 3: Awareness of Consumer Protection among Youth in Lunglei**

Consumer protection consists of laws and organizations designed to ensure the rights of consumers as well as fair trade competition and the free flow of truthful information in the marketplace. The laws are designed to prevent businesses that engage in fraud or specified unfair practices from gaining an advantage over competitors and may provide additional protection for the weak and those unable to take care of themselves. Consumer protection laws are a form of government regulation which aims to protect the rights of consumers. For example, a government may require businesses to disclose detailed information about products—particularly in areas where safety or public health is an issue, such as food. Consumer protection is linked to the idea of "consumer rights" (that consumers have various rights as consumers), and to the formation of consumer organizations,, which help consumers make better choices in the marketplace and get help with consumer complaints. Consumer protection can also be asserted via non-government organizations and individuals as consumer activism.

Lunglei is located at [22.88°N 92.73°E](#) and has an average elevation of 722 metres (2368 feet). It is a town, situated in the south-central part of Mizoram state, northeastern India. Lunglei, sometimes spelled Lungleh, literally meaning 'bridge of rock' got its name from a bridge like rock found in the riverine area around Nghasih - a small tributary of the river Tlawng. It is one of the most populous towns in the Mizo Hills, located 131 miles (235 km) south of Aizawl. It is one of the prominent districts of Mizoram. Encompassing a total area of 4,538 sq. km, the district of Lunglei has a

population of 1, 37,155. The district of Lunglei is situated at a distance of 235 km from Aizwal, the capital of Mizoram and is easily accessible by well maintained roads. The district of Lunglei has been further divided into major sub divisions of Hnahthial SDO (S), Lunglei SDO (S) and Tlabung SDO (S) for the administrative convenience of the district officials. The important towns of the district of Lunglei in Mizoram are Tlabung, Lunglei and Hnahthial. Lunglei town is the administrative headquarter of the district. It has 9.97% of the forest land within its total area. Most of the indigenous local inhabitants of the district of Lunglei depend on agriculture and earn their livelihood from growing crops. The cash crops of coffee and rubber help the district to earn its revenue. The farmers of the district mostly practice the traditional method of shifting cultivation, which is popularly referred to as jhum. Rice is the principal crop in the agricultural economy. Cottage industries produce handloomed cloth, furniture, agricultural equipment, woven textiles, and bamboo and cane work.

In Lunglei, there is also much awakening with regards to consumer protection and its awareness. Consumer clubs are formed and various awareness campaign are undertaken among the people in Lunglei, especially among the youth. Through the consumer associations and consumers' clubs, much awareness campaign have been undertaken. The awareness among the youth as well as the people in general is greatly elevated with the formation of Lunglei District Consumer Association (LDCA). The LDCA played the parent role in giving support to the consumer and also providing valuable awareness information as well.

### **3.1 How Lunglei District Consumer Association ( LDCA) started:**

3a. LPG Gas Agency was first opened in 1989. At the time when the Gas Agency opened in Lunglei, there were about 340 families who have connection at Vanbuangi Gas Agency in Aizawl. Those families were asked to transfer their connection from Vanbuangi Gas to Lunglei. But the Gas Agency in Lunglei did not want to accept their transfer, and the Gas Agency in Aizawl did not want to take them back either. Problems arose due to these which led to the establishment of “Vanbuangi Gas Consumers’ Association Lunglei” with Mr. Sapliana Chongthu as its Secretary. Through this Association, they fought but were unsuccessful and subsequently filed their case at the District Forum, Lunglei. As per the District Forums’ decision, the gas connections were transferred successfully. Following the successful resolve to their issue, Vanbuangi Gas Consumers’ Association, Lunglei was dissolved. Since Gas consumers continued to have recurring problems “Lunglei District Gas Consumers Association” was again established in 1992 in order to help resolve gas connection related issues, with Mr. Sapliana Chonthu as its president. Through this Association, issues relating to gas connection were fought and resolved in whatever way possible.

3b. Around the year 1990 there were two Cable TV Operators in Lunglei. Problems arose in connection with connection fees, monthly fees and the channels provided. “Lunglei Cable TV Subscribers’ Association” was established.

3c. In 1991 the PHE department decided to stop their house to house water distribution, the people in their desperation formed “Lunglei Town House (Water) Connection Association”. From their efforts the PHE department continued to distribute water in every household.

3d. In 1992 there was a sudden rise in Telephone bills; those who used to pay Rs. 300 had to pay between Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 6, 00,000. In order to address the issues of the mass, “Lunglei District Telephone Subscribers’ Association” was established at Govt. Girls’ High School. .About 98% of the complaints were sorted out successfully.

3e. On March 15, 1995 World Consumer Rights Day, the four Associations merged into one and “Lunglei District Consumers’ Union” came about. Mr. Sapliana Chongthu was elected as the President. At the time when registration of the Association was in process under Mizoram government, “Mizoram Consumers’ Union” was already in existence in Aizawl area. Therefore, the word “Union” was changed to “Association”. So “Lunglei District Consumers’ Association” was registered under the Government of Mizoram Firm and Societies Registration (Extension to Mizoram) Act 1976 (Mizoram Act No. 3 of 1977) with a Registration No. of **SR/MZ-25 of 8.4.1999**.

3f. Since 1989 awareness on Consumer Rights began to slowly develop in Lunglei area. Associations were formed based on the needs to address the issues of the people. The four Associations that the people had formed merge into one big Association, “Lunglei District Consumers’ Association” in March 15, 1995 leading to the birth of LDCA. March 15 was accepted as LDCA Anniversary

### **3.2 Venues of Consumer Awareness Campaigns:**

With the money received from Consumer Welfare Fund, Government of Mizoram, Consumer Awareness Campaigns were held within the District in the following locations/places/venues listed below:

1. Chhipphir
2. Govt. Zotlang H/S
3. Haulawng
4. Venglai Lunglei
5. Buarpui
6. Electricveng Lunglei
7. YMA Sub-Hqrs Conference, Cherhlun
8. South Vanlaiphai
9. Ramthar
10. Govt. Venglai H/S
11. Govt. Theiriat H/S
12. Govt. Zobawk H/S

13. ETC, Bualte

14. Mualthum North

15. Tawipui South

There are plans to organize Consumer Awareness Campaigns in every village according to the availability of time within the District and is yet to be followed up. Currently there are invitations from Bunglei and Lungsen to organize awareness programme, but due to lack of funds, it could not be materialized at present.

### **3.3 Consumers Club in Lunglei District**

As per requests from the Government of Mizoram and Mizoram Consumers' Union to form Consumers Club, High Schools, Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges within the District have started to form Consumer Club. Many institutions formed Consumers Club; elected its leaders and reported to LDCA. Those Clubs formed were reported to MCU Hqrs Aizawl and they were given aid; those that reported late about their Club were not able to receive aid on time.

Listed below are the consumers club that receive aid from LDCA and the Government:

1. Consumer Club, Zotlang H/S
2. Consumer Club, Mualthum North H/S
3. Consumer Club, Bazar H/S
4. Consumer Club, Venglai H/S
5. Consumer Club, GHSS, Lunglei
6. Consumer Club, Liantawna H/S, Lunglawn
7. Consumer Club, Theiriat H/S

8. Consumer Club, Tlabung H/S
9. Consumer Club, Lungsen H/S
10. Consumer Club, Pangzawl H/S
11. Consumer Club, S. Vanlaiphai H/S
12. Consumer Club, Cherhlun H/S
13. Consumer Club, Thingsai H/S
14. Consumer Club, Tawipui H/S
15. Consumer Club, Sertlangpui H/S
16. Consumer Club, Lunglei Govt. College, Lunglei

Apart from these sixteen consumer clubs, there are also other consumer clubs in the district of Lunglei, which are:

1. Consumer Club, Zohnuai H/S
2. Consumer Club, Zotlang H/S
3. Consumer Club, Buarpui H/S
4. Consumer Club, Hnahthial HSS
5. Consumer Club, Haulawng H/S



### **3.4 Activities of consumer awareness and consumerism in Lunglei district**

#### **1. LDCA & CVOA Joint Meeting:**

On March 30, 2007, there was a joint meeting at I & PRO Conference Hall, Lunglei between LDCA and Commercial Vehicle Owners' Association. Mr. Sapliana Chongthu, President; On this meeting, it was discussed that appeal should be made to the government to repair bad road condition; road construction work undertaken through World Bank not to pass through Lunglei Town; auto rickshaw permit to be no longer issued.

#### **2. Meeting on Consumer Awareness Campaign:**

On March 19, 2007 at 2:00 pm, a meeting was held at DC's Office Chamber. On this meeting, the members had a review of the tentative programme for Consumer Awareness Campaign. It was suggested that a detailed report should be submitted to the District Commissioner.

#### **3. World Consumer Rights day 2007:**

World Consumer Rights Day was observed at I & PRO Conference Hall, Lunglei. It was conducted by the President of LDCA. A brief report was given and the Chief Guest Mr. F.J. Liantluanga, DCSA & DCPO delivered a speech which was followed by discussions. A good number of representatives attended the function that day.

#### **4. Joint Meeting Regarding Poisoning of River Tlawng:**

A meeting was held at PHE EE Office Chamber on March 17, 2007 at 1:30pm. Due to the poisoning of River Tlawng by some miscreants, the PHE department stated their inability to give water supply for about a week and requested the understanding of the people. It was reported that the Department in a joint effort with the Police department worked on finding the miscreants and to help solve the problems of the people and an appeal was made to the Minister of State to provide vehicle to distribute water for meet the demands of the people. It was unanimously agreed that efforts to be continued to find the miscreants and appropriate penalty/punishments be given to them.

#### **5. Telephone Adalat in Lunglei:**

As per the request of LDCA, Telephone Adalat was held in Lunglei at BSNL Office at 11:30 am. Four cases were submitted. Due to the efforts of the DGM five more cases were taken, and all together nine cases were discussed. In order to provide facilities for people living in Hrangchalkawn and the peripheral areas, it was decided that a Mini Exchange to be set up at MPL Complex.

#### **6. World Bank Supported Road Construction:**

An appeal was made to the Government of Mizoram, not to let the undergoing road construction work from Lunglei-Thenzawl-Aizawl, undertaken through World Bank fund, to pass through Lunglei town, but to go according to the initial plan of constructing the road below the town through Saza-Sazaikawn. Secondly, an appeal

was also made to the government that Lunglei-Puipui road to be handed back to PWD. The appeal was not successful.

#### **7. Opening of FCI Godown:**

For a long time, there was a concern about the Food Corporation of India's Godown, Lunglei which was lying unused. Regarding this, information was given to the concerned authorities a number of times. A meeting was held on April 24, 2007 at the DCSO Office Chamber, to discuss the issue at hand. It was agreed that steps to be taken for the proper functioning of the FCI Godown, and for this FCI Area Manager, Aizawl should be approached as quickly as possible. It was promptly followed up and as per petitioned, on December 20, 2007, Vanlalzawma, MP (LS), Chairman, State Food Consultative Committee for Mizoram, inaugurated the FCI Godown. Since the inauguration of this godown, it was expressed that there will be a proper and better method of distribution of rice; on an average there will be 6700 quintals of rice in stock every month; three contractors were selected; the rice will be carried directly to Lunglei instead of keeping stock in Aizawl first; there would be no longer shortage of rice in the southern part of Mizoram; the rice bags will have a more accurate measure. It is a great boon for the people that the FCI godown is now open to the public.

#### **8. Essay Writing Competition:**

Essay writing competition was organized among the Club members as a form of Consumer Awareness Campaign with the theme "Consumer Rights and Protection".

After careful invigilation, the following are the results of the competition: First Position – Lallawmzuali, Roll No. 31, Class XII (A), GHSS, Lunglei; Second Position - TC Vanaldenga, Class XII (Arts), BHSS, Serkawn; Third Position – H. Lalthanpuia, Class XI, GHSS, Lunglei. The result of Consumer Awareness Campaign Essay Writing Competition was announced on August 7, 2007 at 1:00 pm at GHSS, Lunglei followed by distribution of prizes which included a sum of money and a certificate. The Chief Guest on this day was H. Lalthansanga, President, MJA, Lunglei.

#### **9. Training on Consumer Awareness:**

Training on Consumer Awareness, with the initiation of Extension Training Centre Lunglei, was organized on 29, 2008 at ETC Pukpui, Lunglei. As invited, the LDCA General Secretary attended the programme as Resource Person. On this day a study was conducted on the topics, “The Consumer Rights as provided in the Consumer Protection Act 1986” and “Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies”. 50 women attended the programme.

#### **10. One-Day Training on Consumer Awareness:**

With the initiation of ETC, Lunglei, a One-Day Training on Consumer Awareness was organized on June 17, 2008 at Bualte village. As invited by ETC, Sapliana Chongthu and Biakchungnunga Ralte, attended the programme as Resource Persons.

### **11. Maxicab Fare:**

Since the new road from Lunglei-Thenzawl-Aizawl was opened, there were no changes regarding the fares even though the road becomes shorted. The issue was taken up by the HPC Chairman that the Maxicab fare should be as per the government's rate. It was successfully negotiated with the government and the new fare becomes Rs. 270/- on the new road from Rs. 300/- on the old road.

### **12. A separate Consumer Affairs Department:**

The department most instrumental in looking after the welfare of the consumer, "Consumer Affairs" department was under the Food & Civil Supplies Department. But it was felt that they could not handle the work load and the affairs of the consumer. So, it was appealed to the government to open a separate department, "Consumer Affairs Department" that would be solely responsible for the issues of the consumers, but the appeal was not successful.

### **13. Payment of Water Bill:**

Payment of water bill is done in one place for the whole population of Lunglei town. In order to pay the bill, one has to queue for a long time under the sun, with no proper space, under the shade of someone's house and it was extremely time consuming and troublesome for the people. In an effort to bring an end to this problem, the PHE department authorities were approached and a proposal was made to open a separate counter at Lunglawn and Serkawn locality. In effect to the proposal, one new counter

was opened for payment of bills at Lunglawn, and in Serkawn locality there is a plan to construct a room for the said purpose at the Indoor Stadium.

#### **14. Payment of Electricity Bill:**

Much like the problem of paying water bill, there is only one place to pay electricity bills in Lunglei Town and it causes a lot of inconveniences for the people. In order to avoid this problem, authorities were approached. At the moment there has not been anything done to eliminate the problem, the matter should be pushed further.

#### **15. Payment of Phone Bill:**

For a long time in Lunglei telephone bills were paid at the Post Office. Most often it used to be crowded, congested and sometimes takes two three days to pay the bill because of the number of people queuing to pay the bill. To eliminate this problem and to speed up the slow process of receiving the bill body, it was proposed and requested to the authorities to open an Account Branch in Lunglei town. At the pretext of Security reasons, shortage of staffs, and the less number of telephone subscribers, the Divisional authorities kept on rejecting the requests which doesn't help in solving the people's problem. The BSNL General Manager was earnestly pleaded with to open an Account Branch in Lunglei through the consumer organizations in Lunglei. This time they managed to successfully negotiate and the Account Branch was opened and much of the peoples' problem was solved. Both the matter of difficulty in paying bills and the failure of the bill body to reach the subscribers was also sorted.

Secondly, a petition that was made on March 3, 2006, to make it feasible to pay Telephone Bill at Kikawn BPO (Near SBI Lunglei Branch) was also granted. It is now made possible to pay Telephone Bills at Kikawn BPO, from the early hours of the morning and it has become very convenient for the consumers. The problem of having to queue up for long distances over a long period of time, has been greatly minimized, and with the initiatives of Lunglawn LDCA Branch, it is also made possible to pay Telephone Bills at Lunglawn BPO.

**16. District Consumer Protection Council:**

With the permission of The Consumer Protection Act 1986, a request has been made to the Government of Mizoram to create District Consumer Protection Council in Aizawl, Lunglei and Saiha district even if it is not possible as of now to create one in every district within Mizoram. The government has consented to the request and DCPC was set up in every district. LDCA President and General Secretary were nominated as members and through this Council, the consumers welfare is being worked on.

**17. District Forum Member:**

Due to the inadequate number of members in the District Forum, the work was stalled for a long time. A list of names of credible people were submitted to the government; those on the list were also personally approached and appealed to take on the responsibility, and to provide their bio-data and other documents. At present there is a strong and effective District Forum, to cater to the needs of the consumer. A lot of the complaints from the consumers are sorted through the efforts of the District Forum.

### **18. Automated Teller Machine:**

On May 24, 2004, a request was being made to the SBI authorities to install ATM in Lunglei. A fully serviceable ATM was finally installed in 2009, and the consumers have greatly benefited the use of the machine.

### **19. LDF Cable Network:**

In order to do away with the problems faced by the Cable TV consumers, it was felt the need to have one more Cable Operator. As a part of this process, one person was sent to pursue the issue in Aizawl. To meet the needs and demands of the people LDF Cable Network was opened and operated on February 22, 2006. The Opening Ceremony was conducted at I & PRO Conference Hall, Lunglei with Dr. R. Lalthangliana, Hon'ble Minister for Information, as the Chief Guest. The Ceremony was hosted by LDCA General Secretary and a speech was delivered by LDCA President. The LDF Cable Network has been a blessing to the consumers. Since the functioning of this Cable Network the high rate of connection fee became free and the plan to increase the monthly fee was revoked, providing the consumer with the much awaited Local Channel with numerous options on the Channels to watch with a better service.

From the above mentioned, it is possible to deduce that there is much contribution from various persons, organizations and even the government in the area of consumer awareness. With regard to the youth, we can see that in most of the schools and even in the colleges, there exist consumer clubs. So it is justifiable to say that the youth of Lunglei town are more or less aware of consumerism to a certain



extent. But on the other hand, there is no in depth awareness and the youth on there part, have not played significant roles. These can be seen from the fact that in order to solve the problems faced by the people, it is not the youth who take up the responsibility to fight for their due rights, but other personnel and NGO's who take the initiative. Problems will continue to rise, in order to address them and to solve the issues that arises, it is essential that the youth bundle up to form a strong and powerful opinion of their own. It can be seen that consumer protection in the town of Lunglei is taking a steady step towards improvement. Awareness campaigns among the youth are undertaken through paper presentations, debate, essay writing competitions etc. The people are becoming more and more aware of their rights. But as a whole it can be seen that redressals are sought after only in those things which concern the general public as a whole. But in regards to individual complaints and personal consumer problems, there are no such complaints and cases to be seen. It is not justifiable to say that there is no violation of individual rights as consumers but the fact is that as individual consumers, the people are still timid in expression their disapproval and that they have a liability to suppress their dismay as individual consumers.

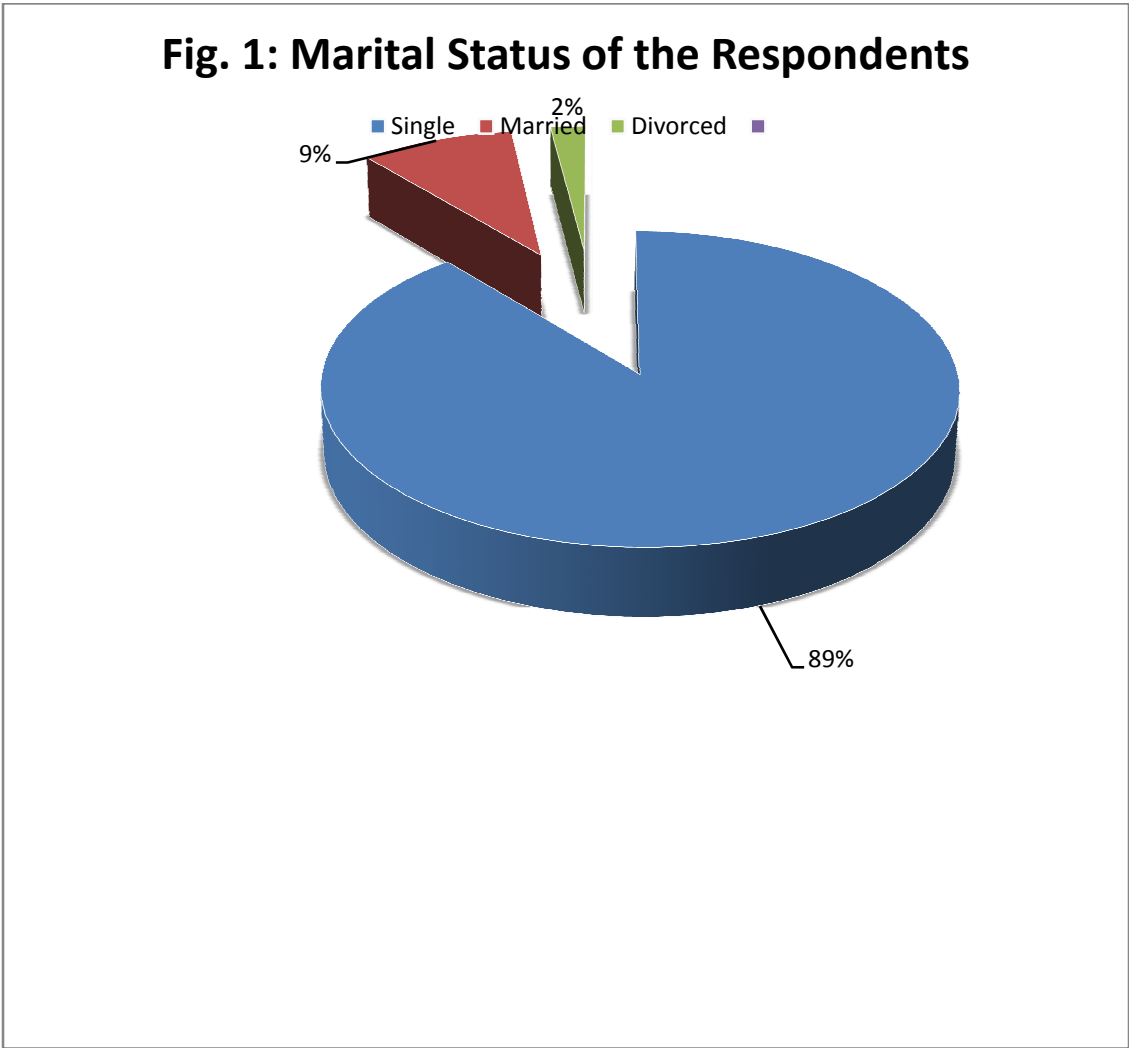
### 3. 5. Findings and Analysis

Lunglei town has 23 village council, the study has taken 10 village councils purely on random sample basis using lottery system. Out of 10 selected village councils, 20 respondents were chosen from each village council, 10 male and 10 females on purposive sampling method. The total sample taken up was 200 respondents. Table.3 presents the features of sample selected.

Table 3: Demographic Profile

Sl. No		Frequency	Percentage
<b>I.</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Single	178	89
	Married	18	9
	Divorced	4	2
<b>II.</b>	<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
	Class 10	10	5
	Class 12	166	83
	Graduate	20	10
	Post Graduate	4	2
<b>III.</b>	<b>Occupation</b>		
	Student	162	81
	Teachers	4	2
	Government Servants	24	12
	Others	10	5

1. Marital Status: Marital status of respondents is an important variable in this study because married people usually tend to show sign of responsibilities in the family which may lead to the act of taking actions as and when required with regards to consumer protection.



Out of the total population, 178 respondents were single, which is 89% of the total population, 18 were married, making 9% of the total population while 4 respondents were divorced which makes up 2% of the total population. This is an anticipated finding because the age group selected for the research is between 15-24 which is still a generation who are most likely to still be unmarried in the Mizo society. This marital status goes a long way in determining the actions of the respondents towards their grievances with regards to products and services, which can be seen from the findings and analyses of the study.

Table 3.1 Awareness about Consumer Protection Act 1986

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
Yes	134	18	4	156
No	44	-	-	44
Total	178	18	4	200

All the married and divorced respondents are aware of the Consumer Protection Act 1986 whereas only 24.72% of the respondents who are single are unaware of the act

Table 3.2 Awareness about Consumer Rights

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
Yes	141	18	4	163
No	37	-	-	37
Total	178	18	4	200

When Consumer Rights are concerned, 79.21% of the single respondents are aware about the rights and the married and divorced respondents are all aware of their rights.

Table 3.3 Exercising of their Consumer Rights

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
Yes	138	18	4	160
No	40	-	-	40
Total	178	18	4	200

Only 20% of the respondents have not exercise their rights as consumers one way or the other. This 20% are all from the single respondents.

Table 3.4 Respondents seeking redressal for dissatisfied products

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
All the time	-	1	-	1
Most of the time	-	1	-	1
Sometimes	78	16	4	98
Never	100	-	-	100
Total	178	18	4	200

Only one respondent seek redressal for dissatisfied products all the time, this respondent is from the married category, 100 respondents have never seek redressal, the respondents who have never sought redressal comprises 50% of the total respondents and all of them belong to the single respondents category.

Table 3.5 Cross-checking price from alternative sources

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
All the time	-	5	2	7
Most of the time	16	10	1	27
Sometimes	151	3	1	155
Never	11	-	-	11
Total	178	18	4	200

When it comes to cross-checking of prices from alternative sources, 94.5% of the respondents have done it more than once. Only 5.5% of the respondents have never cross-checked the prices. Those who have never cross-checked the prices are all single respondents.

Table 3.6 Ensuring accuracy of measuring equipments

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
All the time	-	-	-	0
Most of the time	6	13	2	21
Sometimes	123	5	2	130
Never	49	-	-	49
Total	178	18	4	200

The respondents are not in the habit of checking the accuracy of the measuring equipments all the time, however only 49 respondents have never check the accuracy of the measuring equipments, these 49 respondents are all single in their marital status.

Table 3.7 Rechecking the weight of products

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
All the time	-	1	1	2
Most of the time	5	11	2	18
Sometimes	101	6	1	108
Never	72	-	-	72
Total	178	18	4	200

73 respondents have never rechecked the weights of the products they are buying, these respondents are all single. 2 respondents are in the habit of always rechecking the weights, these two respondents are married and divorced respectively.

Table 3.8 Checking M.R.P. of products

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
Yes	135	18	4	157
No	43	-	-	43
Total	178	18	4	200

Only 43 respondents are not in the habit of checking the M.R.P. of the products that they are going to buy. These respondents are all single and respondents who are married or divorced have usually check the M.R.P. of the products.

Table 3.9 Duty to file complaint when products are sold above M.R.P.

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
Yes	131	18	4	153
No	47	-	-	47
Total	178	18	4	200

When products are sold at rates higher than the M.R.P, 76.5% respondents feel it is their duty to file complaints, while the other 23.5% respondents do not feel it is their duty. The 23.5% respondents are from the single marital status group.



Table 3.10 Checking of expiry dates of products

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
All the time	100	16	1	117
Most of the time	42	1	2	45
Sometimes	36	1	1	38
Never	-	-	-	0
Total	178	18	4	200

When it comes to checking the expiry dates of the products are involved, all the respondents have checked the expiry dates one time or the other. 117 respondents, which is more than half of the total respondents are in the habit of checking the expiry dates of products all the time

Table 3.11 Filed complaints at Consumer Court

Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
Yes	-	5	2	7
No	178	13	2	193
Total	178	18	4	200

Out of 200 respondents, only 7 respondents have ever filed a complaint at the consumer court. Of these respondents, 5 of them belong to the married category while the remaining 2 respondents belong to the divorced category.

Table 3.12 Asking for cash memo when buying products

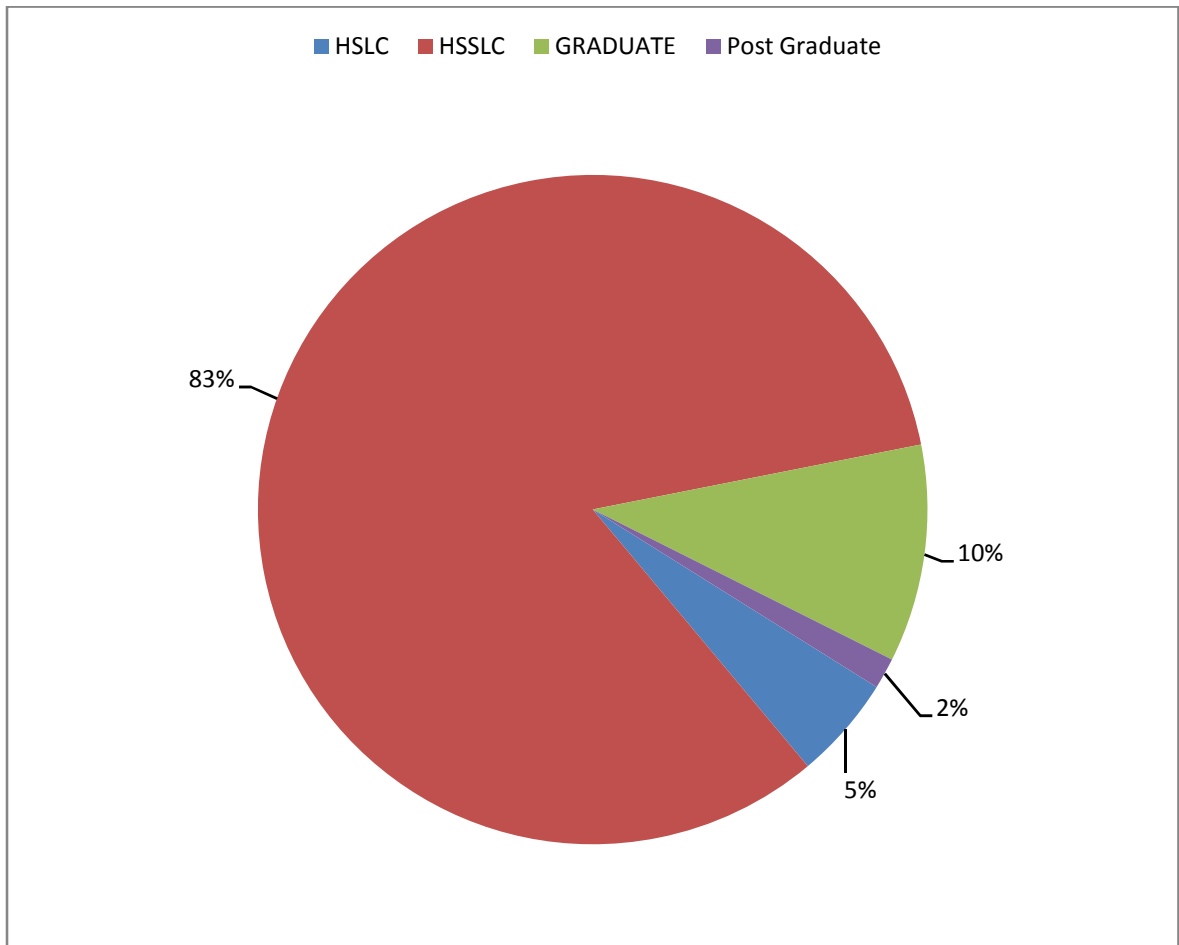
Response	SINGLE	MARRIED	DIVORCED	Total
Yes	120	18	4	142
No	58	-	-	58
Total	178	18	4	200

We can see that most of the respondents are generally in the habit of asking for cash memos of the product that they bought. Only 29% of the respondents have never ask for cash memos, these respondents are again from the single marital status category.

From the above summarization, we can see that among the respondents, the married respondents are more likely to make complaints or to use their supreme veto power of refusing sub-standard products or inquire about information related to the quality price, measurements, purity of the product, whether suitable as per requirement or not etc. Further interactions with respondents reveal that the married respondents are all involved in the household maintenance and all of them are either the head of the family or their spouse. This shows that the responsibility that they have towards their household have much impact on not only their consumer awareness but that of their responsibility as consumers as well. This is also seen in the respondents who have been divorced. Although out of the four respondents who are divorced only two of them are the main bread earners for their households, yet all of the divorced respondents share the same enthusiasm and motivation to inquire about the products and take necessary

actions. Although some of the divorced respondents are not compelled by responsibilities, yet out of the constant practices that they have endeavoured before, they tend to be more responsible as compared to the respondents who are single. Coming to the respondents who are single, forming 89% of the total respondents analysed, they are very much aware of their rights as consumers, the protection they can sought after and the redressal they can seek. Yet hardly any respondent from the group who are single take effort to intialise their responsibilities as consumers to either inquire about the standards of the products or to complain about the defects and malpractice of the sellers. Thus from the classification of the marital status we can see that the married and divorced respondents are more likely to take actions when their rights as consumers are violated.

Fig. 2: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS



2.Educational Qualification: This is another important variable because educational level of a person contributes to how perceptions and attitudes are formed. Out of 200 respondents, 4 (2%) of the respondents were post graduates, 20 (10%) of them were graduates, 166 (83%) of them have passed HSSLC and 10 (5%) of them have passed HSLC . There is a large volume of consumer awareness as far as educational qualification is concern. But exercising the rights as consumers, the youth in Lunglei have diverse range when the educational qualification is taken into consideration. The following tables depict the youths' consumer awareness and their exercising of their rights and responsibilities.

Table 3.13 Awareness about Consumer Protection Act 1986

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
Yes	4	128	20	4	156
No	6	38	-	-	44
Total	10	166	20	4	200

Among the respondents only 22% of them are unaware of the Consumer Protection Act 1986, these respondents who are unaware of this act are the respondents who have passed class 10 and class 12. Among the graduates and post graduates, all the respondents are aware of the Consumer Protection Act 1986.

Table 3.14 Awareness about Consumer Rights

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
Yes	5	134	20	4	163
No	5	32	-	-	37
Total	10	166	20	4	200

All the graduates and post graduates respondents are aware about their consumer rights. In the case of the respondents who have passed class 10, 50% are aware of their rights. Among the respondents who have passed class 12 only 23.88% are unaware of their consumer rights.

Table 3.15 Exercising of their Consumer Rights

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
Yes	4	133	19	4	160
No	6	33	1	-	40
Total	10	166	20	4	200

Most of the respondents are exercising their consumer rights and only 20% of the respondents are not exercising their rights as consumers. Among the respondents who are not exercising their rights are 6 respondents who have passed class 10, 33 respondents who have passed class 12 and 1 respondent who is a graduate.

Table 3.16. Duty to file complaint when products are sold above M.R.P.

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
Yes	4	125	20	4	153
No	6	41	-	-	47
Total	10	166	20	4	200

When products are sold higher than the M.R.P. 76.5% of the respondents feel that it is their duty to file complaints. Only 23.5% of the respondents does not feel that it is their duty to file complaints. All the respondents who do not feel that it is their duty to file complaints are from the category of those who pass class 10 and class 12.

Table 3.17 Respondents seeking redressal for dissatisfied products

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
All the time	-	-	1	-	1
Most of the time	-	-	-	1	1
Sometimes	4	72	19	3	98
Never	6	94	-	-	100
Total	10	166	20	4	200

50% of the respondents have never sought for redressal when they are dissatisfied with the product that they bought. These respondents are all from the group of respondents those who have passed class 10 and class 12

Table 3.18 Duty to file complaint if sub standard goods are sold

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
Yes	5	117	20	4	146
No	5	49	-	-	54
Total	10	166	20	4	200

When sub standard goods are sold, out of the 200 respondents, 146 respondents feel that it is their duty to file complaints. The remaining 54 respondents are from the groups who have passed class 10 and class 12.

Table 3.19 Checking expiry dates of products

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
All the time	7	86	20	4	117
Most of the time	3	42	-	-	45
Sometimes	-	38	-	-	38
Never	-	-	-	-	0
Total	10	166	20	4	200

At one point or the other, all the respondents are in the habit of checking the expiry date of the products.

Table 3.20 Rechecking weight of products

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
All the time	-	-	1	1	2
Most of the time	3	2	10	3	18
Sometimes	1	98	9	-	108
Never	6	66	-	-	72
Total	10	166	20	4	200

Among the respondents, 36% of them do not recheck the weight of the products that they have bought. These respondents belong to the group who have passed class 10 and class 12 only.



Table 3.21 Cross-checking price from alternative sources

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
All the time	1	1	3	2	7
Most of the time	1	13	11	2	27
Sometimes	4	145	6	-	155
Never	4	7	-	-	11
Total	10	166	20	4	200

Only 11 respondents do not take initiative to cross-check the price of goods they have bought from alternative sources. These respondents are again from those who have passed class 10 and class 12.

Table 3.22. Asking for cash memo when buying products

Response	CLASS 10	CLASS 12	GRADUATES	POST GRADUATES	Total
Yes	4	138	20	4	166
No	6	28	-	-	34
Total	10	166	20	4	200

When buying products, 83% of the respondents used to ask for cash memos. However 17% of the respondents belonging to the group who have passed class 10 and also class 12 have never asked for cash memos.

The following table shows the relationship between the educational level and the marital status below which is also depicted in the diagram

Table 3.23. Relationship between educational level and marital status

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	MARITAL STATUS		
	Single	Married	Divorced
Class 10	6	3	1
Class 12	157	7	2
Graduate	14	5	1
Post Graduate	1	3	0

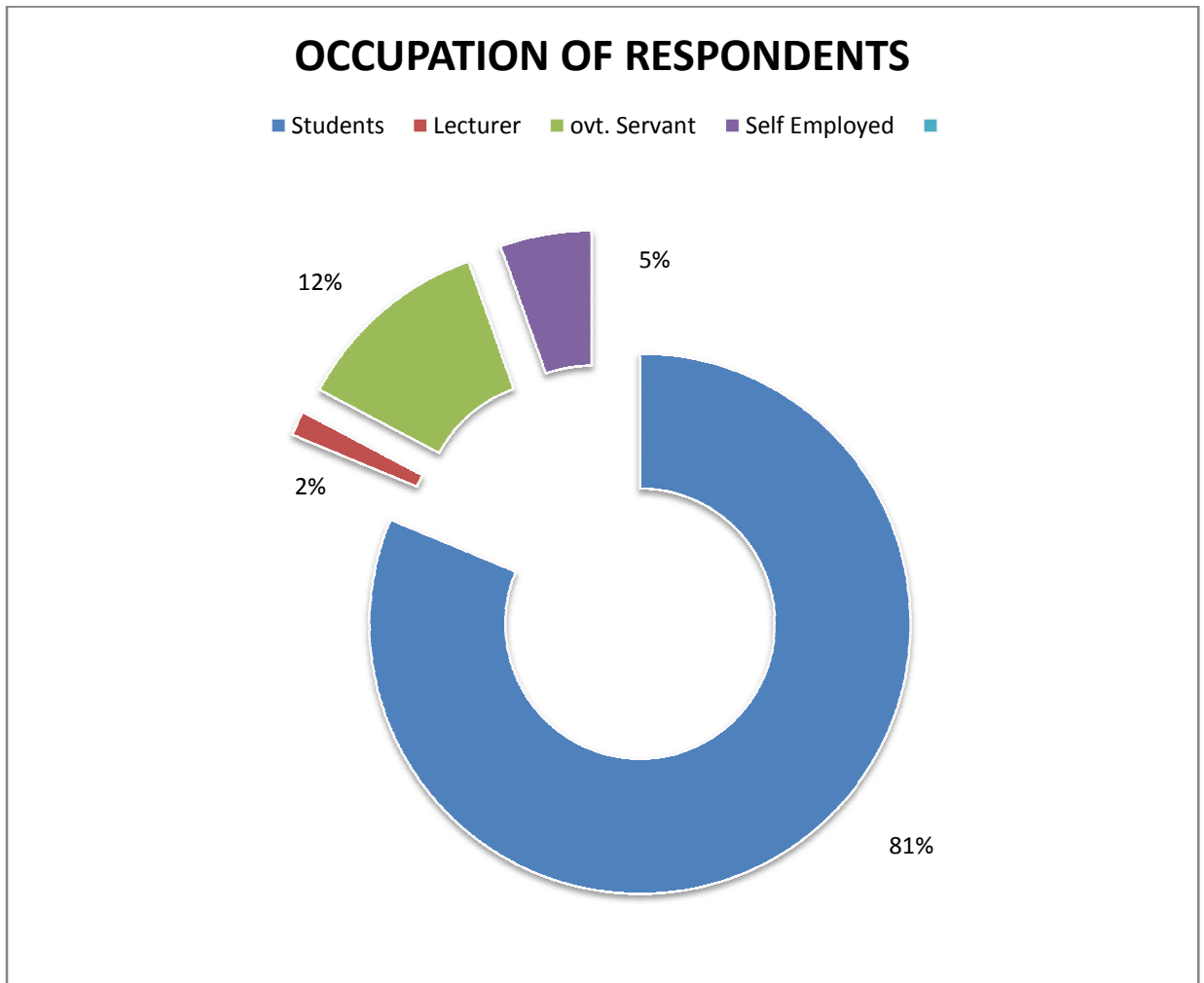
From the following table we are able to see that among the class 10 passed and class 12 passed there are some married and divorced consumers as well. Thus the diversity which is seen in the awareness and responsibility level of the consumer awareness in the case of the class 10 passed and class 12 passed consumers may be affected by the marital status. The class 10 passed and the class 12 passed consumers who are married or divorced are more aware and responsible than the same educational qualification consumers who are single.

Using *chi square* for the table, the negative response  $\chi^2$  is 43.051

As some frequency in table are less than 10, we also work out  $\chi^2$  value applying Yates' correction whose result is 32.395. and the degrees of freedom is 6

Table value of  $\chi^2$  for 6 degree of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 12.592. The calculated value of  $\chi^2$  by both methods (i.e. before correction and after Yates' correction) is greater than the table value. This means that the calculated value cannot be said to have arisen just because of chance. Thus we can conclude that the diversity in the level of consumer awareness in accordance with the educational level of the respondents is affected by their marital status.

Fig 3



3. Occupation: Under occupation, results show that there are 162 students, 4 lecturers, 24 government servant and 10 self employed who comprises 81%, 2%, 12% and 5% respectively of the total sample. All the occupations are in broad categories and as such specifications is not made. In other words, any respondent who is still studying is under the broad classification of a student and the discipline of his studies is not taken into consideration. Government servants are also not specified of their designation, this is also the case for lecturers and self employed.

Table 3.24 Awareness about Consumer Protection Act 1986

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
Yes	129	4	16	7	156
No	33	-	8	3	44
Total	162	4	24	10	200

Among the respondents only 22% of them are unaware of the Consumer Protection Act 1986. 33 students, 8 government servants and 3 from the category of others are unaware of the Consumer Protection Act 1986. The respondents who are teachers are all aware of the act.

Table 3.25 Awareness about Consumer Rights

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
Yes	133	4	18	8	163
No	29	-	6	2	37
Total	162	4	24	10	200

All the teachers are aware about their consumer rights whereas among students, government servants and others, a few of them are unaware of their consumer rights. These respondents comprise 18.5% of the total respondents.

Table 3.26 Exercising of their Consumer Rights

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
Yes	133	4	17	6	160
No	29	-	7	4	40
Total	162	4	24	10	200

20% of the respondents have not exercised their rights. These respondents are students, government servants and others.

Table 3.27 Duty to file complaint when products are sold above M.R.P.

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
Yes	129	4	15	5	153
No	33	-	9	5	47
Total	162	4	24	10	200

Only 23.5% of the respondents do not feel that it is their duty to file complaints when products are sold above M.R.P. Only all of the teachers feel that it is their duty to file complaints.

Table 3.28 Respondents seeking redressal for dissatisfied products

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
All the time	-	-	-	1	1
Most of the time	-	1	-		1
Sometimes	85	3	7	3	98
Never	77	-	17	6	100
Total	162	4	24	10	200

50% of the respondents sought redressal for dissatisfied products. Majority of the students sought redressal for dissatisfied products while majority of government servant and others have never sought for redressal.

Table 3.29 Duty to file complaint if sub standard goods are sold

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
Yes	128	4	8	6	146
No	34	-	16	4	54
Total	162	4	24	10	200

73% of the respondents feel it is their duty to complain if sub standard products are sold. However, 17%, 8% and 2% belonging to students, government servants and others respectively felt otherwise.

Table 3.30 Checking expiry dates of products

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
All the time	93	4	16	4	117
Most of the time	39	-	3	3	45
Sometimes	30	-	5	3	38
Never	-	-	-	-	0
Total	162	4	24	10	200

All the respondents have checked the expiry dates of products at one point of time or the other.

Table 3.31 Rechecking weight of products

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
All the time	-	1	-	1	2
Most of the time	2	2	10	4	18
Sometimes	95	1	9	3	108
Never	65	-	5	2	72
Total	162	4	24	10	200

36% of the respondents have never recheck the weights of the products they bought. These respondents comprises 32.5% from the students, 2.5 from government servants and 1% from others.



Table 3.32 Cross-checking price from alternative sources

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
All the time	1	3	1	2	7
Most of the time	3	1	17	6	27
Sometimes	147	-	6	2	155
Never	11	-	-	-	11
Total	162	4	24	10	200

Only 11 respondents have never cross-check price from alternative sources.

These 11 respondents are all students.

Table 3.33 Asking for cash memo when buying products

Response	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	GOVT. SERVANT	OTHERS	Total
Yes	114	4	20	4	142
No	48	-	4	6	58
Total	162	4	24	10	200

29% of the respondents have never asked for cash memos for the products that they bought. Majority of the respondents belonging to the occupational group “others” have never asked for cash memo while few students and government servants also have never asked for them.

Table: 3.34 Overall consumer awareness and activities

SL No	Statement	Yes	No
1	Aware about Consumer Protection Act 1956	156	4
2	Aware about Consumer Right	163	37
3	Exercise Ceonsumer Rights	160	40
4	Ask cash memo for goods bought	166	34
5	Seek redressal for dissatisfied products	100	100
6	Duty of filing complaint of products sold higher than MRP	153	47
7	Duty of filing complaint of sub standard goods	164	54
8	Filed complaints at consumer court	7	193
9	Checking MRP of products	157	43
10	Aware that MRP can be bargained	6	194
11	Have bought products higher than MRP	137	63
12	Aware that products cannot be sold higher than MRP	59	141
13	File complaint for products below Rs 50	2	198

Findings from the table shows that more than 3/4<sup>th</sup> (75%) of the respondents are aware of their consumer rights as well as the Consumer Protection Act. Necessary activities to be a well aware consumer like checking cash memo, MRP are also much undertaken by the respondents and the percentage level is also more than 75% in these areas as well. However, even though more than 70% of the respondents are aware that products

cannot be sold higher than MRP, yet 68.5% of the respondents have bought goods higher than the MRP. Amazingly although the awareness level of various consumer concerns are above 75% and that more than 70% of the respondents feel that it is their duty to file complaints, in reality only 3.5% of the respondents have filed complaints.

There were personal interactions with each of the respondents after the completion of their schedule, and based on the interactions and observations, the research observed the following major findings.

- Most of the respondents are single and do not feel the responsibility to take initiative when they are violated as consumers.
- The awareness level with regards to the educational level is greatly governed by the respective marital status.
- There is also a tendency among the youth to buy products at a higher rate at their locality rather than buying them at the MRP rate or lower in other localities since they find it easier and less time consuming to buy the products at a higher rate at their locality which they can accomplish within a minute or so rather than spending more than ten minutes or more just to buy commodities at a few rupees less.
- Adulteration is prevailing in numerous volumes especially in the case of natural gas, milk and building materials. Most of the respondents take it for granted that these items are as they should be and they are not vigilant enough to make complaints about sub-quality products
- Hoarding is another problem created by the sellers. When there is some scarcity in other areas of Mizoram which do not have effect on Lunglei, sellers tend to create artificial scarcity especially in food items. The consumers are forced to buy them at a

higher price or to forego their buying of the food stocks. In these cases, rather than showing their dissatisfaction, the consumers are in a rush to buy the food items before they run out.

- Conspicuous consumption is another problem faced by the consumer. This problem is a result formulated out of the action of the consumers themselves. The consumers especially the youth are in the habit of spending a lot of money for buying on occasions such as birth anniversaries, weddings and festivals. As the demand made by the consumer is so great during this season, the sellers are aware that the consumers are not reluctant to buy their products even if they double the price of their products. For the
- youth in particular, this season is a time when their fashion is at its peak. Thus they are willing to spend all their year saving at this season making them very vulnerable for price extortion as they are willing to pay outrageous prices for their garments and clothing.
- Some areas tend to have a monopolistic market due to the remoteness of the areas.
- When the supply of the product could not meet the demand of the consumers, the consumers themselves are making price extortion whereby the consumers are willing to buy the goods in the black markets at very high rates.
- With regards to consumer court, majority of the forum consist of non-judicial member and the Consumer court is not presided by the persons having legal expert knowledge.
- With regard to the judicial matter, the complain procedure is felt to be a bit complicated.
- Due to voluminous time of the consumer required at the court session and numerous delays in the decision by the consumer court, the consumer youth lost their confidence of the consumer court.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Suggestion**

It can be concluded that the youth are generally aware of the consumer protections available but they do not take the responsibilities to avail these protections.

Married respondents are more liable to take actions in order to safeguard their consumer rights and to avail consumer protections.

### **Suggestions:**

- In order for the consumer to be self-reliant and protect himself, he must be fully aware of his rights to get equal if not more utility of his/her money. He must inquire the terms and conditions of the transaction including quantity, weight, price and quality of the product.
- It is necessary for the consumers to know their rights as well as their responsibilities. If the consumers are alert and not vigilant, they are not only safe but also their rights and powers are infringed.
- Consumers' education programme should be included in the curricula at least at the school level. Educational institutions should introduce consumer education as one of the subjects in their academic curriculum. Effective steps should be taken to encourage the youth to take active part in the activities of consumer movements.
- Consumer's associations must be formed without any political affiliations. Contribution of voluntary consumer organizations should be motivated.
- National associations, state associations and local associations must be linked with each other.

- Educated people should feel the responsibility of bringing all kind of consumer's exploitation to the notice of press and concerned authorities.
- Consumer movements should be strengthened by organizing more of study circles seminar and conferences in educational institutions and in public gatherings.
- Agencies/department like consumer clubs in schools and colleges, consumer courts, NGOs and advisory council of advocates who are interested to provide free legal services to the consumers should arrange public relations meeting with the youth.
- Strengthening consumer protection movement should be the joint responsibility of the consumer organizations and voluntary agencies, the government, consumer councils and the consumer themselves.
- The target group of youth should be contacted, oriented and motivated. Since the youth are the soft target of advertisement and media, consumer organizations have to focus on them.
- Various channels of communication and electronic media can create mass consumer awareness among the youth.
- To motivate the youth about the products and service, counseling can be implemented. Experts and killed persons along with experienced professionals should be invited to interact and impart the information and to bring change in their attitude about their reluctance to make complains.
- Awareness raising competitions like debates, quiz should be organized and audiovisuals should be used to bring the youth together and impart message in an interesting way.

- Since the youth are always keen to enjoy entertainments, the local folk art maybe used in the form of skits and play to make the message about consumer awareness and consumer protections interesting for the youth.
- For the development of awareness, alertness, vigilance and safety measures among the consumers effectively, the consumers' movement should be made as people's movement.
- The consumer court in Lunglei would be more effective if the government would appoint separate personnel to look after it rather than putting it in the hands of the DC who cannot confine concentration of duties towards the consumer court only.
- Officials, NGOs and other interested people should be fully trained to create the awareness.
- The consumer court should also try to win the confidence of the consumer and simplify the complaint procedure and try to minimize the time requirement of the consumer at the court session.
- The consumer court on their part should also try to make quick decisions. For quick redressal of complaints, number of district forums maybe increased.
- Even if all the suggestions can be accomplished effectively, yet they will not yield fruitful harvest unless and until the consumer themselves take initiatives.
- The consumer should study the price range and the quality that they are looking for or whether they are acceptable to them.
- All the buying decisions should be made by the consumer themselves and should feel free to change the product from the variety available in accordance to their specific needs.

- The youth should know that it is their responsibility as consumers to make all their purchases at the right place to avoid unscrupulous traders. They must be familiar to the available literature regarding the important aspects of the products and services.
- While making purchases efforts should be made to obtain the information about the details of the products and services.
- Before buying the products, information related to the quality, price, measurement, purity, whether suitable as per requirement or not must be taken into consideration.
- Demand for appropriate receipt/cash memo of the purchased good should be made.
- Responsibilities lie with the consumers to see that quality products sold in the market are bought and that the receipt and other relevant document are kept for future references especially for durable goods. Whenever applicable guarantee/warranty card duly stamped and signed by the seller must be obtained.
- For safety and quality measures, product certified with ISI marks must be purchased.
- To prevent hoarding they should not buy more than their requirements.
- Along with the awareness the responsibilities and the duties that exist must be initiated and taken into actions.
- The youth as consumers have the responsibilities to protect themselves and should behave in a responsible manner while exercising their rights.



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## Annexure 1 Schedules for the Respondents (English)

### Part - A

1. Name
2. Address
1. Age
2. Sex
3. Marital status
4. Educational Qualification
5. Occupation
6. Average Family Income (Aprox.)
7. Family Size (No of persons in family)
8. No. of Adults in family (Above 18 years)
9. No. of Children in family (Below 18 years)

Part - B

1. Do you know there is a law relating to consumer protection known as the Consumer Protection Act, 1986? Yes/No
2. Do you know about 'JagoGrahakJago' campaign? Yes / No
3. Are you aware of your rights as a consumer? Yes/No
4. Do you know that you can file a complaint when you are dissatisfied with the products you purchased or the service you have paid for? Yes/No
5. When you are dissatisfied with the products, do you seek redressal for them
  - a. All the time
  - b. most of the time
  - c. sometimes
  - d. never
6. Are you aware that there is a consumer dispute redressal forum in Lunglei? Yes/No
7. If your answer to Q.6 is YES, have you ever filed a case in the consumer court? Yes/No
8. If your answer to Q.7 is NO, could you state the reasons (\_\_\_\_\_)
9. Are you aware of the procedure to file a case in the consumer courts? Yes/No
10. Do you check the M.R.P before buying the products? Yes/No
11. Do you know you can bargain on MRP also? Yes / No

12. Have you ever bought products at a price higher than the maximum retail price?

Yes/No

13. If your answer to Q.12 is YES, are you aware that products cannot be sold at a price higher than the maximum retail price? Yes/No

14. When products are sold at a price higher than the maximum retail price:

- a. I don't buy the products from the shop
- b) I ask the shopkeeper why it is sold at a price higher than the maximum retail price
- c) I don't bother

15. Do you feel it's your duty to file a complaint if products are sold at a price higher than the maximum retail price? Yes/No

16. When you are dissatisfied with the products you buy,

- a. I express my dissatisfaction verbally with the shopkeeper
- b. File a written complaint with the shopkeeper
- c. File a complaint with the Consumer Forum
- d. Spread bad word of mouth with others
- e. remain silent about it

17. Do you feel it's your duty to file a complaint if the qualities of the products sold are sub-standard? Yes/No

18. Would you file a complaint for low priced products which are below Rs 50 if you are dissatisfied with them? Yes/ No

19. Do you have any problem with regards to filing complaints? Yes/No

20. Have you ever exercised your rights as a consumer? Yes/No

21. In what area are you dissatisfied the most

- a. Durable goods
- b. Non Durable goods
- c. Services (e.g. banking, insurance etc)
- d. Public utility (e.g. electricity, LPG supply, water etc)

22. When you are about to buy food items and medicines, do you check the expiry date?

- a. All the time
- b. most of the time
- c. sometimes
- d. never

23. Do you recheck the weight of the product mentioned on the item?

- a. All the time
- b. most of the time
- c. sometimes
- d. never

24. Do you check the price of vegetables and fruits you buy, from alternative source?(e.g. when you buy potatoes from 1 shop, do you check the price at other shops)

- a. All the time
- b. most of the time
- c. sometimes
- d. never

25. Have you ever experienced food adulteration? Yes/No

26. If your answer to Q.25 is YES, are you in the habit of making complaints?

- a. All the time
- b. most of the time
- c. sometimes
- d. never

27. Further, if your answer to Q.26 is a. b. or c. is YES, where do you lodge complaints?

- a. the shopkeeper
- b. the manufacturer
- c. consumer forum
- d. elsewhere (specify)

28. Furthermore, if your answer to Q.26 is a. b. or c. is YES, has your complaint got redressed to your satisfaction? Yes/No

29. Are you aware of the malpractices indulged by the sellers and advertisers to influence the customers? Yes/No

30. Do you know about ISO and other Quality standards? Yes/No

31. Have you ever come across deficiency in services provided by the marketers? Yes/No

32. If your answer to Q.31 is YES, what was your action?

- a. Complaining to the shopkeeper
- b. Complaining to the service provider
- c. Complaining to the manufacturer
- d. Spreading a bad word-of-mouth
- e. Kept quiet

33. If your answer to Q.32 is “Kept Quite”, why?

- a. Not a big enough issue
- b. Low priced product
- c. Time factor
- d. Mistake on my part
- e. Didn't know whom to contact

34. How well do you feel informed about your consumer rights as a consumer?

- a. Very well informed
- b. Fairly well informed
- c. Not very well informed
- d. Not at all informed

35. How do you perceive the effectiveness of the consumer courts in Mizoram?

- a. Don't know
- b. Not effective
- c. Fairly effective
- d. Very effective

36. Are you aware of your rights as a consumer?

- a. Don't know
- b. Not aware of
- c. Fairly aware of
- d. Very much aware of



37. Do you have confidence in pursuing your consumer rights through the civil courts to resolve any dispute you may have with the trader?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. May be

38. Do you feel that counterfeit (fake) products are made and sold? Yes / No

39. If your answer to Q.38 is YES, do you take initiatives to reprimand them? Yes / No

40. Do you feel that the traders describe their products correctly? Yes / No

41. If your answer to Q.40 is NO, Do you feel it's your duty to report about them?  
Yes/No/Not Sure

42. When you have doubts about the quantity you purchased, do you ensure that the weighting and measuring equipment's are accurate?

- a. Always
- b. Frequently
- c. Sometimes
- d. Never

43. Do you ask for cash memo of the products you purchase? Yes / No

44. If your answer to Q.43 is YES, for what sort of products you collect receipts for:

- a. Durables
- b. Non durables
- c. Services
- d. Public utilities
- e. Any other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

45. Do you think media is playing an effective role in creating consumer awareness?

- a. Don't know
- b. Not effective
- c. Fairly effective
- d. Very effective

46. Do you think the State Government is playing an effective role in creating consumer awareness?

- a. Don't know
- b. Not effective
- c. Fairly effective
- d. Very effective

47. Do you think the Non Govt Organizations (NGOs) are playing an effective role in creating consumer awareness?

- a. Don't know
- b. Not effective
- c. Fairly effective
- d. Very effective

48. Have you ever been taught about Consumer Protection in the school/college?

Yes/No

Annexure 2:

Questionnaires for the Respondents (Mizo)

Part - A

1. Hming
2. Awmna veng
1. Kum
2. Mipa nge hmeichhia
3. Marital status
4. Educational Qualification
5. Hnathawh
6. Kumkhata chhungkaw pawisa thawh chhuah zat (Aprox.)
7. Chhungkua a mihring cheng zat
8. Kum 18 chung lam chhungkua awm zat
9. Kum 18 hnuai lam chhungkua awm zat

Part - B

1. Consumer te dikna chanvo tu, dan, Consumer Protection Act, 1986 a awm tih I hria em? Aw/Aih
2. 'JagoGrahakJago' hi i hre toh ngai em? Aw/Aih
3. Consumer i nihna anga I chanvo te I hria em? Aw/Aih
4. I thil leiah leh hlawhfa emaw I rawih na a lungawilohna I neih in complain i thehlut thei tih I hria em? Aw/Aih
5. I thil lei duh thu sam anih loh in thleng i tum emaw a man pek let I phut ngai em?
  - a. Tum ziah
  - b. A tam zawk ah tum
  - c. a chang changin
  - d. ngailo
6. Lunglei ah consumer forum a awm tih i hria em? Aw/Aih
7. Zawnha 6na i chhana chu 'AW' anih cuan, consumer forum ah chuan i lungawilohna complain chu i thehlut tawh m? Aw/Aih
8. Zawnha 7na i chhana chu 'AIH' anih cuan, a chhan enge?  
(\_\_\_\_\_)
9. Consumer forum a lungawilohna complain thehluh dank al hmang i hria em? Aw/Aih
10. Thil i lei dawnin a MRP i en ngai em? Aw/Aih

11. MRP aia hniamin thil reng reng a dawn theih tih i hria m? Aw/Aih
12. MRP aia sangin thil i lei tawh ngai em? Aw/Aih
13. Zawnha 12na I chhanna khi a 'AW' anih chuan MRP aia to a thil zawrh phal ani lo tih I hria em? Aw/Aih
14. MRP aia sanga thil zawrh anih in
- a.Chumi dawra mi chu ka lei lo
  - b.Dawrkai chu MRP aia sanga a zawrh nachhan ka zawt thin
  - c.Ka ngai pawimawh lo a, ka lei tawp
15. MRP aia sanga thil zawrh anih in complai thehluh hi i mawphurhna niin i hria em? Aw/Aih
16. Thil lei chuan beisei a phak loh in
- a. Dawrkai hnenah tawngka in a lungawilohna ka thlen thin
  - b. Dawrkai hnenah ziakin ka lungawilohna ka thlen thlen thin
  - c. Consumer forum ah ka lungawilohna complain ka thehlut thin
  - d. Midang hnenah dawrkai cu ka rel thin
  - e. Ka ngawih bo pui thin.
17. Thil zawrh reng reng a nih dan tur pangai aia a chhiat in complain thehluh hi I tih mak mawh a niin I hria em? Aw/Aih

18. Cheng sawmnga aia tlem thil leitheih ah lungawilohna lo nei ta la, complain i theh lut tho a ngem? Aw/Aih

19. Complain thehluh dan kalhmang velah harsatna i nei em? Aw/Aih

20. Consumer i nihna anga i chanvo te i hlen chhuak ngai em?

21. Eng berah hian nge lungawilohna i ngah ber

- a. Ral har thil
- b. Ral harlo thil
- c. Banking, insurance etc
- d. Electricity, LPG supply, tui etc.

22. Eitur leh damdawi i lei dawnin a expire hun i en ngai em?

- a. Engtik lai pawn
- b. En tlangpui
- c. En zeuh zeuh
- d. En ngailo

23. Thil i leia a kg zat in ziaak kha i finfiah leh ngai em?

- a. Finfiah ziah
- b. Finfiah tlangpui
- c. Finfiah zeuh zeuh
- d. Finfiah ngailo

24. Chawhmeh leh thei i leiin dawr dangah a man in an leh an loh I finfiah ngai em?

- a. Finfiah ziah
- b. Finfiah tlangpui
- c. Finfiah zeuh zeuh
- d. Finfiah ngailo

25. Ei leh inah pawlh dal emaw buk tlinglo emaw i tawng taw hem? Aw/Aih

26. Zawhna 25na I chhana cu aw anih chuan I complain ngai em?

- a. Complaint ziah
- b. Complaint tlangpui
- c. Complaint zeuh zeuh
- d. Complaint ngailo

27. Zawhna 25na I chhana cu aw anih chuan tu hnenah nge I complain thin?

- a. Dawrkai hnenah
- b. A siamtu hnenah
- c. consumer forum ah
- d. hmundangah

28. Zawhna 25na I chhana cu aw anih chuan i complain cu i duhthusamin a hlawh tling em? Aw/Aih.



29. Dawrkai leh sumdawng tena nangmah hip theih nana thil tha lo an tih thin I hria em?

Aw/Aih.

30. ISO leh quality the fung dangte hi I hre tawh ngai em? Aw/Aih.

31. Sumdawng te dawr nuam lo tak leh anmahni dawrtu te hnena an mawhphurhna hlen lo

I hmu ngai em? Aw/Aih.

32. Zawnha 31na I chhana cu aw anih chuan eng tin nge hma I lak?

- a. Dawrkai hnenah ka complain
- b. Service provider hnenah ka complain
- c. A siam tu hnenah ka complain
- d. Midang bulah ka rel thin
- e. Ka ngawihbopui thin

33. Zawnha 32na I chhana cu ‘Ka ngawihbopui thin’ anih chuan enge a chhan ni le?

- a. Harsatna lian tham ani lo a
- b. Thil man tlawm ania
- c. Hun awmlah vang
- d. Keima thiam loh zawk ania
- e. Tu hnena zualko tur nge ka hre lo a.

34. Consumer I nihna anga I dikna leh chanvo te hi hril hriatthat tok I ni em?

- a. Hril hriat that lutuk ka ni e
- b. Hril hriat that ka ni e
- c. Hrilh hriat em em ka ni lo e
- d. Hrilh hriat ka ni lo e

35. Mizorama consumer court te hi hlawh tling in I hria em?

- a. Ka hre thiamlo
- b. Hlawhtling lo
- c. Hlawhtling ve tho
- d. Hlawhtling lutuk

36. Consumer I nihna a I dikna leh chanvo te I hria em?

- a. Ka hrethiam lo
- b. Ka hrelo
- c. Ka hre ve deuh
- d. Ka hre ve deuh

37. Dawrkai laka I dikna leh chanvo hai lang turin consumer court hmachhawn turin I inring tawk em?

- a. Aw
- b. Aih
- c. Ka chianglo
- d. Ring ve deuh tho

38. A lem te hi siam leh zawrh anni in I hria em?      Aw/Aih

39. Zawnha 38na I chhana cu aw anih chuan, a dikloh zia hrilh hre turin hma I la ngai em?

Aw/Aih

40. Dwrkai ten an thil zawrh nihna diktak an sawi thin in I hria em?      Aw/Aih

41. Zawnha 40na I chhana cu aw anih chuan an mahni laka complain thekkuh hi I tihur niin I hria em? Aw/Aih/Ka chiang lo

42. I thil lei cu buk tlinglo nia I rinhlelh in a bukna chu I enfiah ngai em?

- a. Enfiah ziah
- b. Enfiah tlangpui
- c. Enfiah zeuh zeuh
- d. Enfiah ngailo

43. Thil I lei in cash memo I dil ngai em?      Aw/Aih

44. Zawhna 43na I chhana cu 'Aw' anih chuan eng thilah nge cash memo I lak thin?

- a. Ral har thilah
- b. Ral harlo thilah
- c. Banking, insurance leh a dang te ah
- d. Electricity, LPG supply, tui ah te.
- e. A dangte ah

45. Consumer lampang hrilh hriat na lamah hian media lam hian chak takin hma ala in I hria em?

- a. Ka hrethiamlo
- b. La lo
- c. La ve deuh tho
- d. La lutuk

46. Consumer lampang hrilh hriat na lamah hian state sorkar hian chak takin hma ala in I hria em?

- a. Ka hrethiamlo
- b. La lo
- c. La ve deuh tho
- d. La lutuk

47. Consumer lampang hrilh hriat na lamah hian tlawmngai pawl (NGOs) lam hian chak takin hma ala in I hria em?

- a. Ka hrethiamlo
- b. La lo
- c. La ve deuh tho
- d. La lutuk

48. Consumer Protection lampang hi school ah emaw college ah emaw zirtir I ni tawh em?

Aw/Aih

## BIO-DATA

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### Details of Educational Qualification

Class	Subject	Board/University	Percentage	Division
10 <sup>th</sup> Standard	-	MBSE	67.50%	I
12 <sup>th</sup> Standard	Commerce	MBSE	60.60%	I
Bachelors	Commerce	Calcutta University	41.38%	III
Masters	Commerce	Mizoram University	63.63%	I