

## **A Study on Consumer Awareness about Unethical Marketing Practices of Consumer Durables in India**

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### **Abstract**

Consumer durables' is one of the fastest growing industry segments in India. Consumer electronics and consumer appliances markets in India have witnessed a sustained double-digit growth rate in the past few years. Increasing electrification in rural areas and growing purchasing power of the Indian middle class, both propel the rise in demand of consumer durables in Indian markets.

Hike in the number of vendors and the presence of product importers increased the turbulence in consumer durables' market. Import of products led to increase in quality along with reduction in product cost. Indian manufacturers were then forced for price reduction to up-keep their customer population. Sales-forces were pressurized to induce consumer flow to showrooms. As a result, ethics of marketing and trade practices started to decay.

Unethical marketing practices are abundant in the present scenario of Indian consumer durables' market. Even reputed firms in this sector do not hesitate to play their part in these false games. Majority of customers attracted by such false claims and promises of new models and versions of these products try to upgrade their current products and finally are being cheated and are unsatisfied.

In this paper, an attempt is made to educate consumers about some sort of consumer appliances commonly used in households along with basics of their operation and to expose some unethical marketing practices of the various manufacturers / vendors of consumer durables in the current Indian market. It is also tried to learn the extent to which consumers are aware about their rights and legal protections available against such false marketing practices and to educate them about the same.

The growing importance of ethics cannot be ignored by producers for long, if they desire a sustained development of consumer durables' market. As people become more aware about their rights, the ill-businessmen following unethical practices will have to change their practices.

**Keywords:** consumer durables, marketing, ethics, consumer protection, advertisement

### **Introduction**

Among the global economics turbulence witnessed in the past few years, Indian economy performed a steady growth. Such growth provided consumers with high disposable income and encouraged those seeking to upgrade their lifestyle. A robust 400 million Indian middle class with growing disposable income has been instrumental in driving the demand for various consumer electronics and consumer appliances.

Low household penetration (well below world average) of appliances in India has been provided opportunities for companies to expand their reach. Expansion of modern retail and exclusive company outlets across regions is expected to increase penetration of Home appliances. Other factors fuelling a double-digit growth of consumer appliances in India

are rise in double income nuclear families, easy availability of credit, changing life styles, introduction of new models and increasing consumer awareness.

Along with the increase in demand for consumer durables in Indian market, the number of suppliers of such products also increased remarkably. As a result of encouraged import policies of India, a large number of consumer electronics and home appliances were imported towards the end of the year 2013. Imported products proved to offer good quality products, which are more economical than manufactured products in India. Hence, the Indian manufacturers were forced either to switchover to the import route or to reduce product price to sustain their consumer strength.

Such a volatile situation reflected in marketing practices of these products in India. Targeting the middle class consumers, advertisements and promotions were published in various media to induce a steep rise in demand. Hire purchase scheme with 0% interest, special discounts to employees, scratch and win schemes, tour packages to selected winners etc. are some promotional strategies introduced by vendors.

As part of increased competition, various unethical practices are being present in the marketing activities of consumer appliances. Since most of these products are electrical gadgets, the technology and operations are not easily conceivable by common people. Misusing this situation, marketers include false promises and misleading captions in the advertisements of consumer durables. The presence of celebrities in ads helps to create the feeling of reputation to the product.

During the post-purchase period, the customer realizes that, the special features indicated in the ad do not come up to the level of his expectations. He also realizes that the additional price incurred for the product up-gradation is not worth as claimed by the vendors. Number of such unsatisfied customers has been increased tremendously during the past few years and their experiences are being shared in various social media.

### **Scope**

Misleading or deceptive ads violates consumer's right to information, right to choice and right to safety. When ads are deceptive, false or misleading, the ethics of the manufacturers and sellers is being questioned. There are various legislations in India, which are responsible for regulating the misleading ads, such as i) The constitution of India ii) Consumer Protection Act 1986

iii) The Trademark Act 1999 etc.

The customers should have awareness about the product features they plan to purchase and during purchase of any unsatisfactory product or detected misleading promotional practices; he should know the present legislations in India to redress his disputes. Unawareness or ignorance about such rights may in turn appreciate the seller to continue the unfair trade practices, again and again.

This study may be helpful to common person for understanding the basics of operation of commonly used consumer appliances, so that, he may be able to apply common sense to find out the reality from bogus statements among advertisements and keep distance from pit-falls. Also, this study may be helpful for understanding about unfair trade practices and about their legal rights to redress the disputes related to the purchase of consumer durables.

### **Marketing Practices**

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large.<sup>1</sup> Marketing involves a product or service's attributes, pricing, distribution and promotion. All of these activities must work together to assure successful marketing.

Companies with the most effective marketing efforts thoroughly understand their market or customers and create products and services to meet the market needs, while using the best channels for communicating to a target audience.

Advertising is one of the most powerful tools used for marketing of a product. It has a powerful impact on society through the influence on media. The main area of interest of advertisers is to increase their sales, gain more and more customers and increase the demand for the product by presenting a well decorated, puffed and colorful ad. They claim their products are the best, having unique qualities than that of their competitors, more cost effective and more beneficial.

While marketing in the sector of cut-throat competition, where a bunch of manufacturers are present for selling similar products, such as consumer electronics or consumer durables, the target of each firm is to catch-up and maintain maximum customers with them at any cost. Such targets lead the firms in to some false marketing practices which are unethical and morally wrong.

### **Ethics in Advertising**

Ethics means a set of moral principles which govern a person's behavior or how the activity is conducted. Advertisement is a mode of communication between the seller and a buyer. Hence, ethics in advertising means a set of well-defined principles which govern the ways of communication taking place between the seller and buyer.

Ethics is the most important feature of the advertising industry. Though there are many benefits of advertising, there are some points, which don't match the ethical norms of advertising. An ethical ad is the one, which doesn't lie, doesn't make fake or false claims and is in the limit of decency.

Ethics also depend on what we believe. If the advertisers make the ads on the belief that the customer will understand, persuade them to think, and then act on their ads, then this will lead to positive results and the ad may not be called unethical. But at the same time, if advertisers believe that, they can fool their customers by showing any impractical things like "just pressing one button on the remote control of A/c unit, the room cools instantly to feel like on Himalayas" and for a customer make to purchase this appliance believing such specialty, and finally realizing that, it is not practically true with this A/c unit, this ad will be called as unethical.

### **Consumer Durables**

Indian consumer durable segment can broadly be segregated in to consumer electronics such as Television, Set top box, Audio systems etc. and consumer appliances (also called white goods) like refrigerators, air conditioners, microwave ovens, washing machines, induction cook-tops, vacuum cleaners etc. Majority of consumer durables are electrical and electronic gadgets. They are built to operate in households, at voltage rating of 230 Volts, from single-phase a.c supply. These appliances are designed for industrial purposes separately, usually heavy duty type, operable from 415 Volts, 3 phase supply.

### **Basics of Operation**

Consumer durables mainly possess a power circuit working at 230 Volts, which is used to perform the designed purpose of the appliance. For eg; heating coil of an electric iron box, magnetron of a microwave oven, compressor motor of a refrigerator / air conditioner, LCD display of a television, wash/rinse tub motor of washing machine etc. These equipments also have some auxiliary systems to aid in operation of these power circuit systems, such as air circulation blower in air conditioner indoor unit, cooling fan in outdoor unit, turn-table motor in microwave oven, door lamp and air circulating fan in a refrigerator etc. operable from 230 Volts supply. Finally, control circuit PCBs are provided in such appliances, operating from 12/24 Volts, to program, monitor and control the whole

operating systems of the appliance. This circuit operates with support from thermostats, fuses, temperature sensors, voltage/ current sensors etc.

The consumer should ensure that, the power supply fed to these appliances is fluctuation free at steady voltage (maximum variation permissible within 10% only). Control circuit boards of these appliances are equipped with SMPS (switched mode power supply – an electronic circuits feeding constant voltage output supply at wide range of variation in input voltage, even up to 100%), hence can function at any abnormal voltage situations. One may note that, power circuits of most consumer appliances are not equipped with voltage regulators inside, and hence need stabilizers outside, to ensure perfect operation and long life. But, in most of consumer electronics equipments such as LCD TV, audio system etc, and power circuits are also equipped with SMPS.

### **1. Cooling Appliances**

Cooling appliances such as refrigerators and air conditioners are working with vapor compression cooling system. A gas such as Freon / Ammonia, when pressurized using a compressor, will exhaust temperature and changes to liquid form. When this liquid is allowed to receive heat from our room / cab of the refrigerator, it expands and changes to gas form. Again it is pumped to compressor and heat is exhausted, turns to liquid and this cycle repeats to pump out heat from our room or from vegetables / food items kept inside the refrigerator cab, continuously, till cooling reaches up to the pre-set temperature. A thermostat observes the temperature and switches off the compressor motor, when the pre-set value is reached.

In the latest inverter technology air conditioners, compressor motor is powered from a variable speed drive circuit equipped with an inverter. This enables compressor to run at different speeds when heat load varies, and the fluid flow rate will also vary. This can avoid repeated start-stop operation of compressor, when preset temperature is reached, helping to achieve higher efficiency.

Capacity of the Air conditioner is indicated in terms of heat transferred per hour. 1 Ton A/c has a capacity to pump out heat @ 12000 BTU/hr. Refrigerators are rated at volume of inside cab in Liters. Heat from inside of room is absorbed by the liquid inside the evaporator tubes in the indoor unit of A/c, which is not a rapid process, but takes a natural process time. Hence, a customer shall understand that, instant cooling with Air conditioner / refrigerator is not practical, even if claimed by a vendor.

### **2. Micro Wave Oven**

A magnetron tube, producing high frequency electro-magnetic wave (micro wave) is used in a microwave oven, as heat source. When food to cook is placed in the vicinity of the magnetron tube, is affected by this high frequency electromagnetic wave. This wave makes the molecules of the food to oscillate at the same frequency as that of wave and these oscillating molecules rubs each other at high rate and produce heat in between them. Thus, heat is generated from the internal parts of the food while cooking. Microwave ovens are proved to be efficient for reheating of frozen foods.

Food is placed in dishes made of glass or ceramic (magnetron has no capability enough to oscillate the molecules of such materials, hence do not heat) over a turntable. Rotation of food while cooking makes more homogeneously cooked food. One may note that, cooking in microwave oven is a slow process and instant cooking is not practical.

Modern microwave ovens are equipped with an additional resistance type heating element for grilling and a fan to circulate air (convection) inside cab for uniform heat transfer. This model is termed as combi type.

### **3. Induction Cook-Top**

A copper coil placed in an open iron core is used in induction cook top. When power supply is given to this coil, iron core is magnetized and magnetic field is generated. Since core is open, magnetic field emanates out and reaches at the top of the stove. Utensil made of magnetic material is placed at cook top and is very near to this coil. Hence, the magnetic field passes through the utensil bottom, where a voltage is induced in it and an eddy-current is passed through. This current generates heat at the bottom side of utensil and used for cooking.

The main limitation of induction cook top is that, the heat generated by eddy currents will vary based on the size of the bottom of utensil, quality of material, accuracy of placement over the magnetic coil etc. Being an inductive equipment, power factor is very poor and hence power consumption is higher. The cooking process is slow, as energy transfer is happened through magnetic field.

### **4. Other Appliances**

In a washing machine, a motor helps to generate whirling motions in a wash tub, in which cloths are soaked in detergent solution. Spin tub rotates at high speed with the help of a motor. By centrifugal action, water being separated from cloths and keep them dry. A programming circuit controls the above motions as programmed by the user, so that, a complete washing and drying cycle is carried out.

Vacuum cleaner creates vacuum using a blower motor assembly and dust particles being sucked away along with air, through a filter bag. Filter bag retains dust particles and let air escape away. Bag needed to be cleaned / replaced periodically.

A purchaser of consumer appliances should learn the above basics of their operation before moving to a vendor shop for purchase. He should aware that, the performance of all these electrical appliances primarily depends on the quality of electricity feeding to them. Voltage stabilizers should be provided to feed regulated power supply and to protect their power circuits from over/under voltages; voltage surges etc., even if the appliance manufacturer does not insist for.

A customer should remember that, the heating/cooling ability of such appliances will depend on the electrical capacity of the device. 1 Ton (1040 W) compressor of A/c unit cannot cool a room as quick as a 5 Ton (5200 W) compressor do. He should carefully go through the technical specifications declared by the manufacturer and note the electrical wattage of the equipment to compare the features claimed by the models. Since domestic power supply source is limited (max 30Amp), a customer shall not expect wonders from these appliances.

Never believe the declarations in ads or by salespersons blindly, but apply common sense. Never go for cheaper quality appliances, because they may consume more electrical power per output, resulting high electricity bills, in turn increase the life cycle cost. It may also be noted that, cost of equipments may not be an indicative for quality in operations.

### **Common Unethical Practices**

A bunch of consumer electronics and appliances are available in Indian market, through dealers and exclusive showrooms. Online marketing and direct selling enables customers to purchase without visiting a showroom. On the media, ads and sales promotions are flooded and the customer is confused while selecting a model/brand.

Following are some unethical advertisement practices sorted out from the media, helpful for customers to understand the false claims and reality. Name of suppliers not disclosed to avoid disputes.

**Refrigerators:**

<b>Claims from Vendor</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Customer should do</b>
<p><b>10 Years Warranty</b></p> <p><b>Conditions Apply</b></p>	<p>Conditions apply</p> <p>1. Part cost of compressor only covered.</p> <p>2. Freezer, condenser, Overload relays, main PCB, control assembly etc not covered</p> <p>3. Standard service/visit charges and gas filling charges apply from 2<sup>nd</sup> year of warranty.</p>	<p>Go through warranty conditions clearly before purchase.</p> <p>Check for any small size letters in the warranty display and confirm their meaning.</p> <p>As a general practice, Standard warranty is for 1 year period.</p>
<p><b>Provided with protection from voltage variations</b></p>	<p>Most manufacturers provide stabilized sources for control circuits only, no power circuits have.</p>	<p>Go through the specifications.</p> <p>Seek help of a technician.</p> <p>Insist for external voltage stabilizer.</p>
<p><b>‘Hygiene Fresh’ Eliminates bacteria up to 99.99%</b></p>	<p>Company has provided 3 air filters and UV LEDs in the airflow path.</p> <p>UV LED is poor in disinfection.</p> <p>No mechanism provided to measure the level of disinfection of air.</p>	<p>Purity of air inside a refrigerator is not essential.</p> <p>Apply common sense &amp; save extra cost.</p>
<p><b>‘Smart Diagnosis (Extra-fast Trouble shoot &amp; repair mechanism)</b></p>	<p>During an appliance failure, customer can call the toll-free number and rectification process initiated through existing customer care systems only.</p>	<p>Register the product in the company web site after purchase. Any delay in services should be questioned</p>
<p><b>‘Smart Connect’ During long power failures, this feature allows to keep your food fresh at 28 W power only</b></p>	<p>When power fails, refrigerator connects to your inverter, and maintain the air flow inside the cab. Since compressor is not working, cooling inside cab reduces by time, as in a conventional model.</p>	<p>Compute extra cost for this feature and apply common sense. If compressor is not working, cab is like a thermo-box only.</p>
<p><b>“Ice cubes in minutes, no tension during long parties”</b></p>	<p>Refrigerator can make ice as per its cooling capacity. Household refrigerator cannot make ice faster as industrial deep freezers do.</p>	<p>Understand that, heat removal is slower in a domestic refrigeration system.</p>

**Air Conditioners:**

<b>Claims from Vendor</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Customer should do</b>
<b>“Himalaya cool option” By a finger-touch on remote key, your room cools like Himalaya within minutes</b>	The model is inverter A/c, in which fluid flow can be made faster to speed up cooling. But a domestic A/c never cools your room like Himalaya within minutes.	Go through technical specifications thoroughly. Do not expect wonders from A/c connected to a 25Amp domestic power source.
<b>“Mosquito away” This model is equipped with a mosquito repeller device, hence money savings from lack of vaporizer purchase.</b>	An electronic circuit can produce high frequency audio waves resembling male mosquitoes. Female mosquitoes fertile with eggs (those bite) try to keep away from male mosquitoes and hence fly away from room. It is an old, rejected technology, and does not work successfully.	Install A/c to cool the room, not to keep mosquitoes away. Let other proved equipments do that function. Neglect such claims and reduce purchase costs.
<b>“Anti-Bacteria Filter” keeps your room bacteria free</b>	The claimed model has provided with a special filter (disinfectant filter) additional to dust filters. No sensors provided to check the degree of disinfection and no instructions about filter changing periodicity.	Room air disinfection (such as in an operation theatre) is not an easy process, and simply cannot be done using an air-filter. Costly equipments are needed for.
<b>“Comfortable sleep mode” checking your metabolism rate and adjust temperature automatically to give you a sound sleep</b>	This A/c unit is programmed to reduce @ 1°C at every hour for 2 hours and then continue at preset temperature. No sensors provided to check body metabolism rate of the user.	Human body systems are complex and costly equipments are needed to measure its various parameters. Use common sense to ignore such claims.

**Microwave Oven:**

<b>Claims from Vendor</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Customer should do</b>
<b>10 Years Warranty For Charcoal Heater</b>	Standard warranty of 1 year only. Additional warranty does not cover for main PCB, display PCB HV diodes, HV transformers etc. For Magnetron part cost covers 3 year warranty. Standard service/visit charges applicable during extended warranty period.	Go through warranty conditions clearly before purchase. Check for any small size letters in the warranty display and confirm their meaning.
<b>New charcoal heater for better grilling</b>	Heating element emits light resembling charcoal, no other connections with ‘charcoal’.	Go through technical specifications before purchase.

**Induction Cook top:**

<b>Claims from Vendor</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Customer should do</b>
<b>Automatic Voltage Regulator equipped, safeguard from voltage problems</b>	Control circuits and display unit provided with SMPS. Power circuit (about 2000 W) cannot be provided with voltage regulator at this equipment cost.	No stabilizer available in market for induction cook top (comparatively cheaper equipment) Use with care
<b>“Anti-magnetic Wall Technology” to prevent you from magnetic radiations</b>	Magnetic field emits from top surface shall hit utensil bottom to heat. If utensil is smaller/ placed wrong, leaking magnetic radiation will hit you well, and dangerous if you are wearing pace-maker.	Conventional induction cooker has metal shield at sides. At top, no protection is possible. Never pay more for such stupid claims.
<b>“No harm of Burn”</b>	People believe that, utensil placed over induction cook top never heat. If it is full of food, side walls may not be hot. But, if it is almost empty, side walls will be hot enough to burn you.	Always be careful while handling cooking utensils at kitchen. Burn hazard is present in all type of cooking equipments.

**Legal Implications of Unethical Marketing**

In an atmosphere of enthusiastic competition, in the market, advertisements often have a tendency to make a mountain out of a molehill and twist facts, which affect vulnerable consumers. The constitution of India guarantees freedom of speech including advertising. An ad is termed ‘misleading’ when it misinforms people or modifies reality, thus affects buying behavior. Hence, most of the developed countries have legislated comprehensive laws that govern and control advertising.

Following are some of legislations, which are responsible for regulating the misleading ads in India;

1. The Constitution of India: The constitution of India explicitly protects freedom of speech and expression in Article 19(1) (a). Even though there is no distinct provision for regulating advertisement policy, which should be adopted by press or media, the Supreme Court has given guidelines through a succession of judgments.
2. Consumer Protection Act 1986: Section 6 of the Act grants consumers the right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services, so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices. Section 2(1)I of the Act under the definition of the term “unfair trade practices” covers the gamut of false ads including misinterpretations or false allurements.
3. The Trademarks Act 1999: In the Trademark Act 1999, section 2(1) clause (i) clearly depicts the manipulative advertising. This section defines ‘False Trade deceptions’. As provided in Section 103 of this Act, any person who applies any false trade description to goods or services shall be punishable with imprisonment and fine.

Any consumer (purchaser of any product/ service) in India, affected by any type of unethical trade practices, misled through false advertisements or aggrieved by any false marketing activities, has right to get legal redressal through various courts or through Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum (CDRF). In CDRF, a white paper complaint affixed with a court fee stamp worth Rs. 10/- along with the original purchase bill is sufficient for redressal. Customers should note that, CDRF functions in all district head quarters.



### Customer Analysis

Study was carried out among middle class customers of consumer durables, to understand the method of purchase, factors influencing their purchase, unethical practices of marketing they have faced so far, and to find out their awareness about the legal rights during false marketing practices they face. The sample size was 50 people, selected from middle level income (more than Rs. 60,000/- per month), selected through judgment sampling technique.

#### Tabulation of Collected data

Table 1 - How often do you visit shop for purchasing consumer durables?

2 – 3 months	6 – 8 moths	Once in a year	Once in 2 years
40%	12%	30%	18%
20 persons	6 persons	15 persons	9 persons

Table 2 - From where you prefer to shop consumer durables?

Ordinary shops	Exclusive Dealer	Supermarket	Internet purchase
2%	80%	10%	8%
1 person	40 persons	5 persons	4 persons

Table 3 - From where you collect information about the product you plan to purchase?

Advertisements	Dealers	Friends	Internet
50%	22%	12%	16%
25 persons	11 persons	6 persons	8 persons

Table 4 - Will you purchase a specific brand / model of a product for a special feature indicated in advertisement?

Yes	Most occasionally	Sometimes	Never
4%	36%	58%	2%
2 persons	18 persons	29 persons	1 person

Table 5 - During purchase, do you check detailed technical specifications of a consumer durable product?

Yes	No	Sometimes	Not aware
26%	4%	20%	50%
13 persons	2 persons	10 persons	25 persons

Table 6 Will you prefer products with longer warranty time, during a purchase?

Yes	No	Sometimes	Do not care
50%	2%	40%	8%
25 persons	1 person	20 persons	4 persons

Table 7 - What will be your reaction, when a special feature shown in advertisement does not work-out really, in the product you have purchased?

Ignore/ Self disappointment only	Complaint to dealer	Complaint to manufacturer	Legal proceedings
30%	60%	8%	2%
15 persons	30 persons	4 persons	1 person

Table 8 - Do you share problems of your purchased product to social media?

Always	Most of the time	occasionally	Never
4%	10%	50%	36%
2 persons	5 persons	25 persons	18 persons

Table 9 - How many times you have been victim for any false marketing practice during purchase of consumer durables?

Never	1 – 3	4 – 7	7+
30%	68%	2%	-
15 persons	34 persons	1 persons	NIL

Table 10 - Are you aware of your legal rights in a situation of being cheated during a purchase of a product?

Yes	No	To a certain extend	No comments
10%	4%	80%	6%
5 persons	2 persons	40 persons	3 persons

### Data Analysis

1. From the selected sample, 40% of people used to purchase consumer durables during 2 – 3 months period and 12% of them purchase during 6 – 8 months. 30% of them purchase once in a year and 18% purchase once in 2 years.

2. From the sample space, an astounding 80% of the people purchase consumer durables from exclusive showrooms. It is surprising that, from supermarket, 10% purchase these products, whereas, 8% only purchase such items from internet. People prefer exclusive showrooms for want of more selections, for technical helps during installation / demo of the product.

3. From advertisements, 50% of people try to gather information from various ads about the product they plan to purchase. Manufacturers clearly know this fact, and hence they concentrate on ads at popular media to generate demand.

4. Sometimes 58% of the respondents and most occasionally 36% of them, purchase a specific brand / model of a product for a special feature indicated in ads. This information shows the potential of an ad to influence a common man to generate the purchase. Hence, the majority of vendors misuse ads to declare a false claim about their product.

5. During the purchase of a consumer durable product, only 26% check the technical specifications, whereas, 20% of them sometimes check it. 50% of them are not aware about the technical specifications of the product. They do not know about the basics of the product operation. This situation is misused by the manufacturers and dealers to sell wrong products and earn profit

One of the aims of this study, is to educate the common customers about the basics of some usual households, so that, they may be able to go through and understand the technical specifications of the product, before purchase.

6. During purchase, 50% of people give preference and 40% of them sometimes give preference to those products having longer warranty period. Fake and misleading warranty displays are often used by vendors to induce more customers. Customers should remember that, standard practice of Warranty is for 1 year only.

7. When a special feature shown in advertisement does not work out really, in the purchased product, 30% of the customers ignore the same and self disappoint only, whereas, 60% make complaint to dealer. Only 2% try for a legal redressal. Complaint to the dealer may be settled usually and most often, the cheated consumer will be made satisfied with a small discount or a gift coupon as compensation. This situation should be changed and ill-businessmen following unethical practices should be exposed in front of law.

8. When the purchased product shows problems or if the customer is unhappy with the purchase, only 4% share the same to social media without any doubt. Most of the time 10% and occasionally 50% share the matter, whereas, 36% never try to expose their bitter experience to the world.

Social media plays a vital role today in the field of information spread out. Let more people come forward to share such bitter experiences to public world, so that, people awareness may improve against such false plays.

9. 70% people in total admit that, they have been victimized to any type of false marketing practices in their past experience. This situation is very alarming. Cheating during selling of any goods / services shall be viewed very seriously by the government, and appropriate actions may be initiated against the culprits.

10. Every people should be aware about the legal rights of an Indian citizen to be protected against any cheating / false marketing practices during selling of any goods / services. Indian government has mechanized several measures for consumer protection and redressal. But only 10% of people participated in the survey know about these mechanisms fully. 80% of them know up to certain extend only, so that, the chance is lower to initiate any legal proceedings during such mishaps. 4% of them do not know at all about such consumer rights.

### **Summary**

Demand in urban markets increases steeply for products such as LED TVs, Split Air conditioners, microwave ovens, beauty and wellness products etc. In rural markets, durables like refrigerators, washing machines, induction cook-tops etc. are likely to witness growing demand in the coming years. The rural market has recently witnessed around 30 per cent growth rate in demand for electronics and home appliances. Urban growth is likely to be driven by new technology / innovative products, lifestyle products and replacement demand.

In order to make their positions safe in this growing industry sector, Indian companies as well as global giants are planning new games every day. Their advertisements and marketing practices slowly changes to unethical in the platform of tight competition. Finally, customers are the victims.

This study was made with the intention that, the consumers shall be educated about the technical features of common household appliances, and common unethical practices present in the Indian market. Also, they should be kept aware about the legal systems to protect a consumer in India.

### **Findings**

The following are the findings of this study;

1. The consumers, even though they represent a financially sound middle class sector, majority of them are unaware about the basic technology of common household products in the market, which they plan to purchase.
2. Even though they prefer exclusive product showrooms for their purchase, they are mainly motivated by advertisements in media.
3. The consumers are highly attracted by extended warranty declarations of manufacturer.
4. Most of the customers are being cheated by appliance marketers over time, but majority of them hesitate to redress legally, or to share their bitter experiences to the society.
5. Majority of them do not know the legal rights of an Indian citizen against cheating or unethical practices during selling / purchase of any product / service.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made in light of the findings from this study;

1. Customers shall be educated about the very basics of the consumer electronics and durable appliances, so that, they shall be capable to make purchases without technical doubts and to ensure that, their purchase is worth for the money spent.
2. Customers shall also be educated to make them aware about the ill-business methods in the consumer durables' market. They may be educated to exercise their legal rights against fraudulent companies. Let Indian market be customer friendly and free from fraud practices.

### **Limitations**

Although the sample consisted of people from different age groups and gender, representing middle income people, sample size was only 50 people and a more accurate study could be drawn from a larger sample size.

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