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### **A Study To Measure Consumer Awareness About Consumer Rights In Lesakuna, Puthimari of Kamrup (Rural) District**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

The Consumer Protection Act was enacted in the year 1986<sup>1</sup> with the aim of protecting the consumers from unfair trade practices. There are certain rights provided to every consumer by this act. Every consumer should be aware of their consumer rights and responsibilities. There are certain rights given to the consumer for their own safety by this act. The present study attempts to find the awareness levels among the rural consumers of Lesakuna, Puthimari of Kamrup (Rural) District. In the selected area the level of education is not very high as a result of that people are not much aware about the exact provisions of the law. But those habitats have their relatives staying at other urban areas they are comparatively more knowledgeable about the rights.

**Key Words:** Awareness, Consumer, Consumer Protection Act, Rights, Rural.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Consumer awareness means, “making the consumer aware of the product that he/she buys”. Consumer awareness refers to the buyer’s knowledge of a particular product or company and it allows the buyer to get value from what they buy or consume<sup>2</sup>. Consumer awareness is a broader and wider concept. It is a need of the present time. As customers are exposed to many different products because of advertisement campaigns floated by companies, the customers should be made aware about their rights. As of the advertisements are deceptive and make false promises. In this age of globalization and capitalization, the primary motto of each producer is to maximize his profit. They use each and every possible way to increase the sale of their products. Therefore, in fulfillment of their aim they forget the interests of consumer’s and start exploiting them for example- overcharging, selling of adulterated and poor quality of goods, misleading the consumers by giving false advertisement etc. Thus in order to save a customer from being cheated, it is necessary to create awareness. In this way, consumer awareness means creating awareness of a consumer towards his rights. Therefore the need for consumer awareness becomes mandatory and the facts are highlighted in the following points:<sup>3</sup>

1. **Maximum satisfaction achievement:** The income of every individual is limited. He wants to buy maximum goods and services with his income. The full satisfaction of the individual is of utmost importance so he should be able to get the required products at a minimum price with appropriate measurement and he should not be cheated. For the achievement of maximum satisfaction with his limited resources he should be made aware.
2. **Protection against exploitation:** The producers along with the sellers exploit the unknown consumers in more than many ways such as increasing the price than the market price, selling of duplicate goods, underweighting etc. The big companies try to deceive the consumer’s by their false or deceptive advertisements. Consumer awareness protects them from this type of exploitation.
3. **Control over consumption of harmful goods:** There are several goods in the market those are harmful to the society as a whole. For example-liquor,cigarettes,tobacco. The consumer awareness and education motivates people against the purchasing of such goods.
4. **Inculcating of saving habits:** The awareness helps the people to stay away from wastage of money, extravagancy and motivates them to take right decisions.
5. **Knowledge regarding solution of problems:** The consumers are cheated on the basis of their lack of knowledge, illiteracy, innocence and lack of information. Therefore, they should be made aware of their buying rights and through consumer awareness it is provided to them

so that they can't be cheated. Through consumer awareness law proceedings are also done so they can also solve their problems legally too.

6. **Construction of healthy society:** Every member of the society is a consumer so if the consumer is made aware and rationale then the complete society becomes healthy and up to date with their rights.

In 1986, the Consumer Protection Act was passed the government of India to protect the interests of the consumers and it makes provision for the establishment of consumer councils and other authorities for the settlement of consumer's disputes. Consumer protection councils are established at the national, state and district level to increase consumer awareness. There are various rights promoted under this act for the protection of rights of the consumers and they are as follows:

- Right to Safety: It means to be protected against the marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property
- Right to be Informed: It means to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices
- Right to Choose: It means to assure the consumer about accessibility to a variety of goods and services at competitive prices
- Right to be heard: It means hearing will be done on consumer dues at appropriate forums
- Right to seek redressal: It means the right to seek redressal against unfair trade practises or restrictive trade practises or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers
- Right to consumer education: It means the right to acquire the knowledge and skill to be informed to the consumer throughout life.

The major population of India is in rural areas. i.e as per 2011 census, 83.3 crore out of 121 crore Indians are living in the rural parts. So, we can say that the rural market is far larger than the urban market. Every person in the society is a consumer no matter where he resides. People purchase goods and services on a daily basis. As both the buyer and the seller are unaware of his/her rights in the rural markets, they are facing many problems. Every consumer was confronted by exploitations from sellers in terms of high pricing, poor quality, underweighting and so on. In order to protect the consumer's interest, the government has enacted so many legislations. Since every human being is a consumer, he/she must be aware of the consumer protection measures framed by the government.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

The present study intends to measure consumer's awareness about consumer rights in Lesakuna, Puthimari of Kamrup District.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

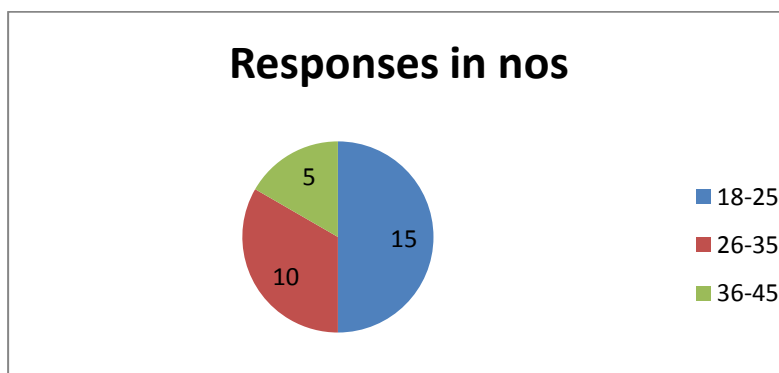
To conduct the study on measurement of consumer awareness towards consumer rights, the relevant data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected by using questionnaires and unstructured personal interview. In order to collect the data convenience sampling method was followed. To collect data 30 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents. The collected data has been analyzed by using charts and figures. Pie and bar diagrams were used to analyze the primary data. The secondary data was collected from books, journals and websites etc. The respondents were taken from various backgrounds of people residing in Lesakuna, Puthimari of Kamrup(rural) District.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

### 1. Age of the Respondents

**Table no 1: Age**

Age of the respondents	Responses in nos	Responses in %
18-25 yrs	15	50
26-35 yrs	10	33
36-45 yrs	5	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>



**Fig no 1: Age**

**Interpretation:** The above table and figure shows the respondent's age that are included in the study. Maximum people i.e., 50% are in the age group of 18-25 years. This shows that the young people who are the future of our country were more in the study.

### 1. Level of education:

**Table no 2: Education level**

Education level	Responses in nos.	Responses in %
Below class 10	10	33
Class 10-12	15	50
Graduate & above	5	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

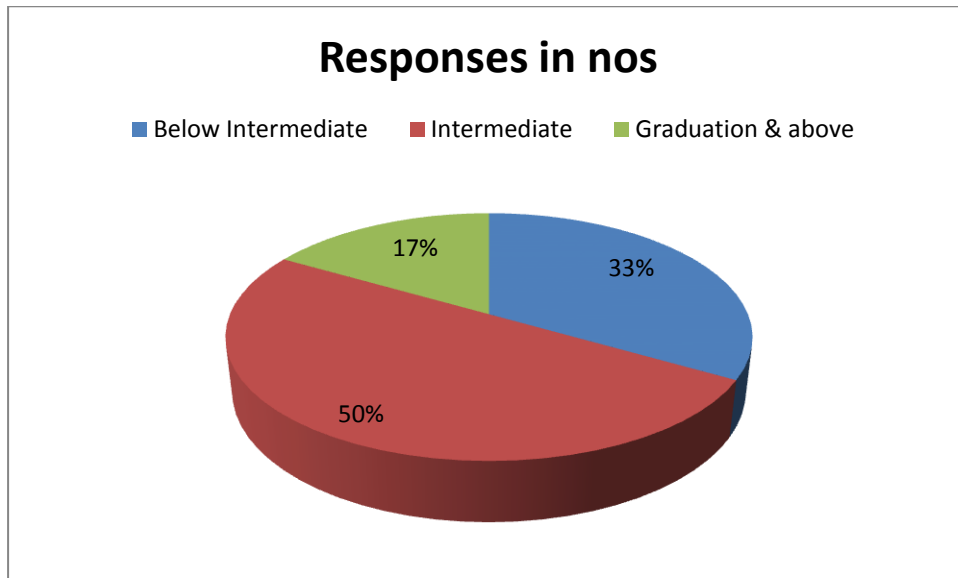


Fig no 2: Education level

**Interpretation:** The above table and figure highlights that maximum numbers of the respondents i.e., 50% are in the class 10-12 slab. This indicates minimum awareness about law can be created amongst the respondents as they will be able to understand it better.

2. Monthly Income of the respondents

Table no 3: Income

Income level	Responses in nos.	Responses in %.
Below 15000	19	63
15000-30000	8	27
30000 & above	3	10
Total	30	100

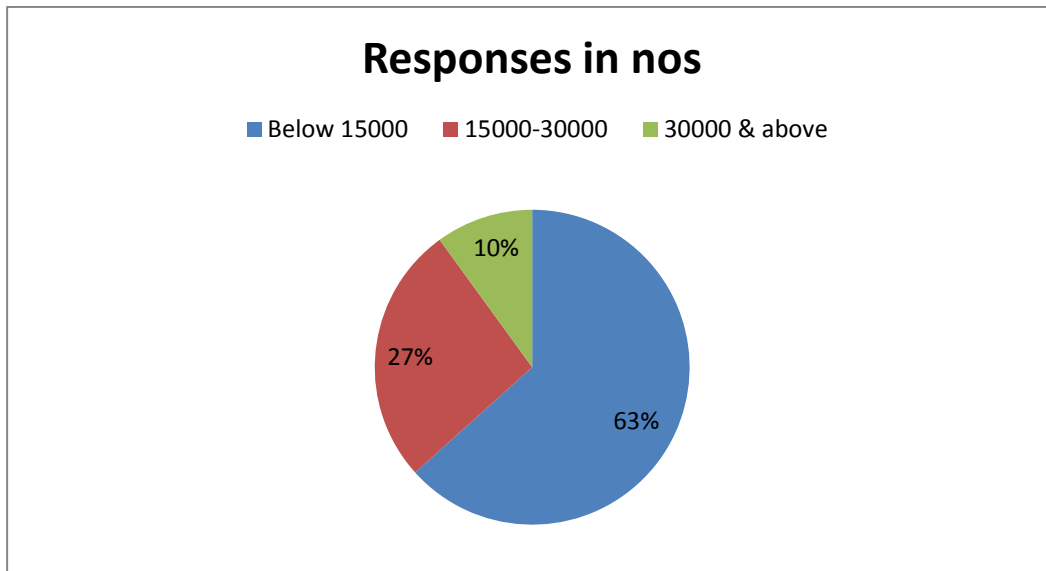


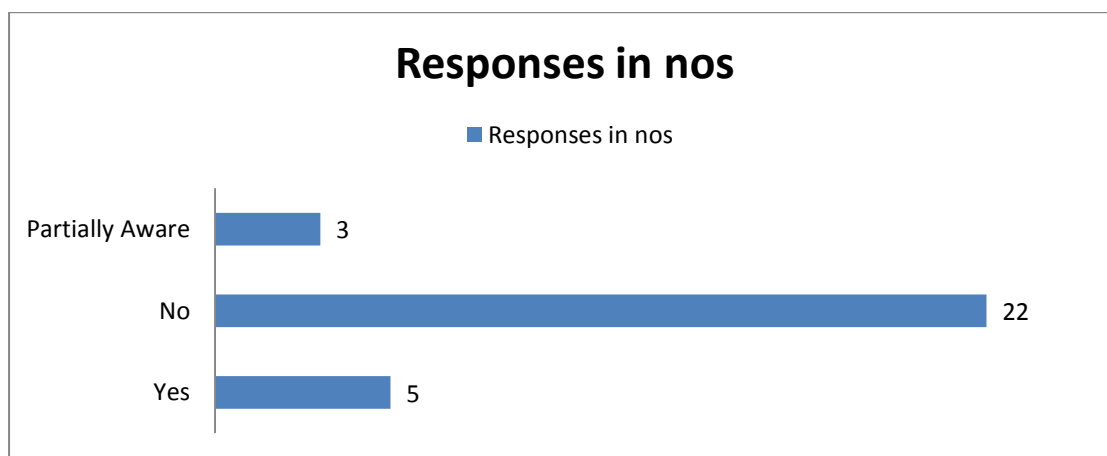
Fig no 3: Income

**Interpretation:** The above table and figure gives us the different income levels of the respondents. It is found that maximum were below the 15000 income level. This indicates that maximum people were not very financially well off.

**3. Awareness about consumer rights/Consumer Protection Act 1986**

**Table no 4: Measurement of awareness**

Responses	Responses in nos.	Responses in %
Yes	5	17
No	22	73
Partially Aware	3	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>



**Fig no 4: Measurement of awareness**

**Interpretation:** The above data tells us that maximum of the respondents were unaware of their rights as a consumer. This tells us about the education backwardness which still exists in the rural parts.

**4. Awareness of the consumers towards Quality assurance standards**

**Table no 5: Quality assurance marks**

Quality Assurance Mark	Responses			
	Yes (in nos)	Yes (in%)	No(in nos)	No (in %)
ISI	10	33	20	67
Agmark	4	13	26	87
Starmark	7	23	23	77
FPO Mark	6	20	24	80
Hallmark	8	27	22	73

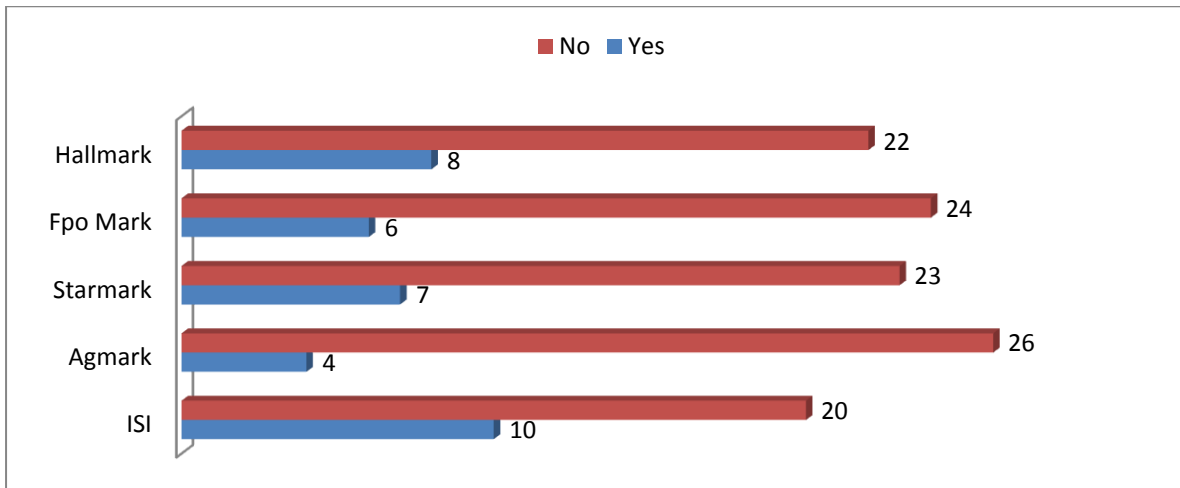


Fig no 5: Consumer’s awareness towards quality assurance standards

**Interpretation:** The above data gives us the information that the awareness level of consumers is very low regarding the quality assurance standards of the products. It is seen that the people were not aware about the quality marks issued by government to certain product informing about their standards.

5. Awareness about Government’s Consumer education programs

Table no 6: Awareness towards government’s consumer education programs

Responses	Responses in nos	Responses in %
Yes	4	13
No	18	60
Partially Aware	8	27
Total	30	100

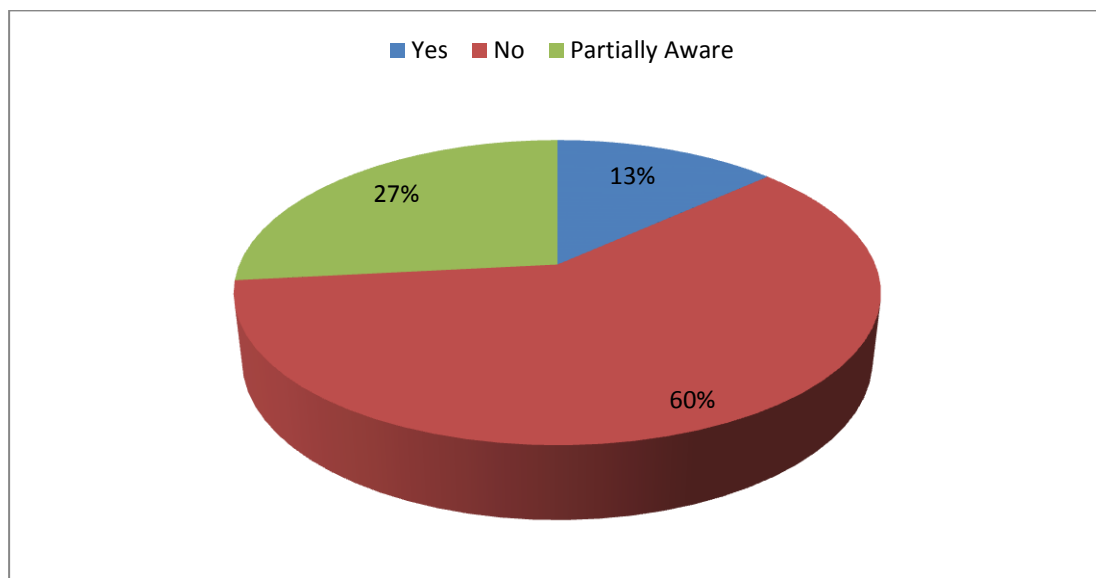


Fig no 6: Awareness towards government’s consumer education programs

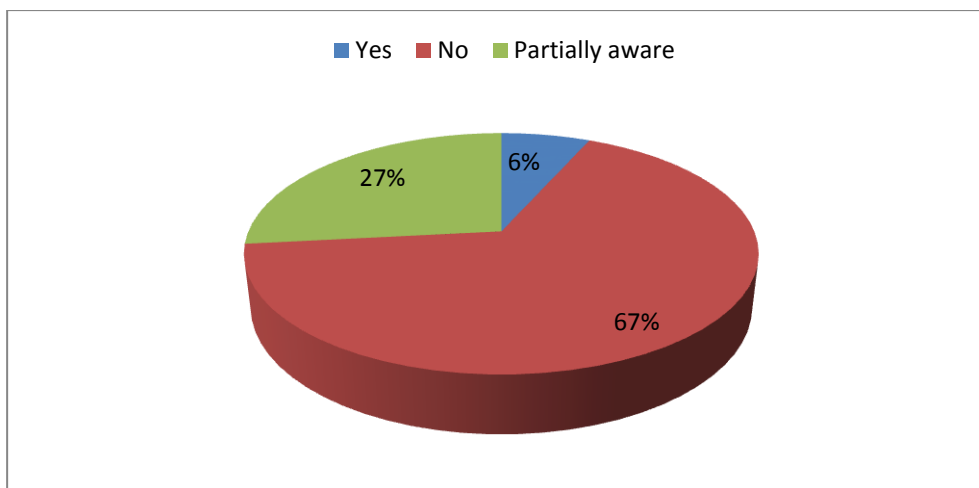
**Interpretations:** The above figure shows us that the awareness level is low in majority towards the programs organized by the government about educating the consumer about its rights

and responsibilities as a buyer or a consumer in the market. This proves that information programs are either not made known to the people or it is not organized extensively.

**7: Consumer’s Awareness towards Consumer Protection Act, 1986.**

**Table no 7: Awareness towards Consumer Protection Act, 1986**

Responses	Responses in nos.	Responses in %
Yes	2	6
No	20	67
Partially Aware	8	27
Total	30	100



**Fig no 7: Awareness towards Consumer Protection Act, 1986**

**Interpretations:** The above data clearly mentions that most of the respondents are not aware about the Consumer Protection Act 1986.

**FINDINGS:**

**The findings of the respective study are given as follows:-**

1. The respondents belong to the age group 18-25 years mostly and it can be clearly seen that most of them are from young adult to adult age group.
2. The educational qualification of the people was mostly limited to intermediate level and below intermediate level.
3. The income levels of people mostly were limited to below 15000 monthly.
4. Most of the people were not aware of their consumer rights at all.
5. It was found that the people had almost zero level of knowledge about the quality assurance standards of the goods sold in the market.
6. The people had no idea about the programs organised by the government to educate the consumer about their rights and responsibilities as a consumer.
7. People were not aware of the union government legislation about consumer protection known as Consumer Protection Act, 1986.



## **SUGGESTIONS:**

**The suggestions regarding this study are given below:**

1. Consumer awareness programs should be conducted especially in the rural areas.
2. Rigorous campaigns need to be taken up to bring awareness among the rural consumers about their rights and responsibilities.
3. The Village Youth clubs are very active and influencing in the rural areas so incentives should be taken to get them involved in organising consumer education programs.
4. The language is also a barrier sometimes so the consumer education programs should be conducted in the local language and with local people of the area.
5. The Voluntary Organizations about consumer assistance should be driven towards working in rural areas.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The rural part of India has been neglected since the era of modernization came into being and therefore the development in these areas is still backward. The rural part of India has most of the population of this nation. The development in these areas should be our priority and for that education helps to go a long way. The education backwardness is still seen to be prevalent widely during our study. The government is doing their part to educate the people to a major extent but it also depends upon the interest of the people to study and try to be aware of their rights. The language is also seen to be a major barrier in drawing the attention of the people towards the programs organized by the government. The rural parts of Assam to get developed and become more active consumers in our economy the rights should be known that are provided to them. So, studying and measuring the awareness levels towards consumer rights forms the basis of my study. This topic of study is very important for the society. However, there is a more better and in-depth scope to do research on this topic which could be fulfilled due dearth of time and space

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