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Awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities among farmers of Haryana

¹Pradeep Kumar and ²Subhash Chander

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Sociology, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar, Haryana, India

²Assistant Scientist, Department of Sociology, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar, Haryana, India

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Corresponding Author: Pradeep Kumar

Abstract

Legislative protections are only one aspect of consumer protection in modern marketplaces; another is consumer awareness. Farmers make up a sizable portion of the consumer base in rural India, especially when it comes to purchasing agricultural inputs and associated services. Their capacity to exercise their consumer rights and carry out their associated obligations is frequently restricted by a lack of knowledge, even in the face of a comprehensive legal system. The present study examined the awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities among farmers in Haryana. A multistage random sampling technique was used to select 160 farmers from four villages across two agro-climatic zones of the state, namely Kurukshetra (wet zone) and Hisar (dry zone). Data were collected through a structured interview schedule covering socio-economic characteristics and awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and chi-square test were used for data analysis. The findings indicated that 69.37% of farmers had a low level of awareness regarding consumer rights, while 42.50% had a medium level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Education, subsidiary occupation, annual income, social participation, and mass media exposure were found to have a significant association with awareness levels. The study highlights the need to strengthen consumer education and awareness programs among rural farmers to promote informed decision-making and protect them from unfair market practices. It was also suggested that government agencies, extension services and universities should organize regular training and awareness campaigns on consumer rights and responsibilities for farmers.

Keywords: Awareness, consumer rights, consumer responsibilities, socio-economic factors, rural consumers

Introduction

Traditional economic theory holds that producers and consumers exchange voluntarily as equal and reasonable partners. However, in practice, market exchanges are frequently marked by structural disparities where manufacturers, producers, and service providers hold a hegemonic position. Such power imbalances frequently expose consumers to unfair trade practices including misleading advertisements, inferior quality goods, adulteration, deficient services and manipulation of prices, weights and measures (Raju *et al.*, 2009) ^[8].

Although consumers have traditionally been described as the “king of the market,” contemporary market conditions reveal that they often remain vulnerable and inadequately protected. Aware of these challenges, the Indian government created a number of laws designed to safeguard the interests of consumers, which led to the establishment of the Consumer Protection Act of 1986 and its later revisions. In an effort to provide accessible and reasonably priced justice, the Act established consumer dispute redressal systems at the district, state, and federal levels. The legal foundation has been further reinforced throughout time by new clauses including product liability, electronic complaint filing, and class action rights. Even with these institutional safeguards, consumer welfare is not always ensured by the sheer presence of legislation. The effectiveness of consumer

protection largely depends on the awareness, vigilance and active participation of consumers themselves (Raju & Rao, 2009) ^[8].

Understanding consumer rights, including the rights to safety, information, choice, redress, and education, as well as the associated obligations, is referred to as consumer awareness. Responsibilities promote ethical consumption, educated decision-making, and proactive grievance redressal, whereas rights enable consumers to confront unfair practices. As a result, awareness is a crucial component of consumer empowerment rather than just a personal quality. Knowledgeable customers are better able to evaluate goods, challenge false advertising, seek compensation when they are taken advantage of, and support a more responsible marketplace. The issue of consumer awareness assumes particular significance in rural India, where farmers constitute a substantial segment of consumers.

Farmers regularly interact with markets for the purchase of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, credit and insurance services. These transactions directly influence agricultural productivity, income stability and livelihood security. However, rural consumers often operate in information-constrained environments and are vulnerable to exploitative practices including overpricing, adulteration, sale of substandard inputs and deficient after-

sales services (Patel, 2017) [7]. Limited access to consumer education, dependence on intermediaries and structural socio-economic disadvantages further intensify this vulnerability. Sociologically speaking, consumer awareness is influenced by larger socioeconomic variables rather than just personal preference. A number of factors, including education, income, landholding size, occupation, caste, social involvement, exposure to the media, and extension contact, have a substantial impact on awareness levels and the capacity to effectively exercise consumer rights.

As a result, analyzing awareness without taking socioeconomic background into account only partially explains consumer behaviour. Existing trends of social and economic inequality are frequently reflected in the distribution of consumer consciousness. The goal of the study is to close the gap between grassroots realities and legislative purpose. It is anticipated that the results will add to policy debates about enhancing consumer education and encouraging fair market system participation, especially in rural areas. Therefore, the present investigation entitled “A Sociological Study on Consumer Welfare and Protection of Agricultural Inputs” has been undertaken with the following objective namely awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities among farmers of Haryana.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in the state of Haryana, located in north-western India between 27°39' to 30°35' N latitude and 74°28' to 77°36' E longitude, with an altitude ranging from 213 to 1097 meters above mean sea level. The state is geographically bounded by the Shivalik Hills in the north, the Yamuna River in the east, the Aravalli Hills in the south-east, and the Ghaggar River in the west. Haryana is broadly classified into two agro-climatic zones, namely the wet zone and the dry zone.

A multistage random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of respondents. In the first stage, one district from each agro-climatic zone was selected randomly, namely Kurukshetra district from the wet zone and Hisar district from the dry zone. In the second stage, one block from each selected district was chosen randomly, *i.e.*, Ladwa block from Kurukshetra district and Hisar-II block from Hisar district. In the third stage, two villages from each block were selected randomly. Accordingly, Niwarsi and Dabkhera villages from Ladwa block and Balsamand and Bhandaheri villages from Hisar-II block were selected for the study. Thus, a total of four villages were included in the study. From each village, forty farmers were selected through random sampling, resulting in a total sample size of 160 respondents. Primary data were collected through personal interviews using a well-structured interview schedule.

The interview schedule was designed to collect information related to the objectives of the study and was developed after consulting relevant books, research articles, reports, bulletins, and government publications. The schedule consisted of questions covering the socio-economic profile and other relevant characteristics of the respondents.

A total of twelve independent variables were considered to assess the profile of the farmers, namely age, caste, level of education, family size, family type, landholding size, subsidiary occupation, annual family income, mass media exposure, social participation, extension contacts, and socio-economic status. Appropriate scoring procedures were followed to measure these variables according to predefined criteria. The data were collected through face-to-face interaction with the selected respondents. After data collection, the responses were coded, tabulated, and analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency and percentage were used to describe the characteristics of the respondents. In addition, the chi-square test was applied to examine the association between selected independent variables and the dependent variables. The collected field data were systematically processed and analyzed to achieve the specific objectives of the study. The results were interpreted based on appropriate statistical analysis to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the study variables.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic profile of the farmers

It was found from the field of study that more than one-third of the farmers (36.25%) were from 36 to 50 years of age group followed by above 50 years (33.75%) and up to 35 years of age group (30.00%). Distribution of caste among farmers showed that majority of the farmers (74.38%) hailed from the general caste. The remaining 16.88% and 8.75% farmers were from backward caste and scheduled caste respectively. Further analysis revealed that more than one-third of the farmers (33.75%) were educated up to senior secondary and above, followed by secondary (27.50%) and middle school (18.13%) respectively. Even 16.88% farmers were illiterate. Data showed that more than half of the farmers (51.88%) hailed from the nuclear family group and 48.12% from the joint family group.

Further analysis revealed that a maximum number of the farmers (45.63%) had 5 to 8 members in the family and up to 4 members in the family (38.75%). It was found that more than one-third of the farmers (35.63%) had small size of land holdings followed by semi-medium (31.25%) size of land holding. Analysis of annual family income showed that more than one-third of the farmers (36.25%) had annual income above Rs. 3,00,000, followed by between Rs. 1,50,00 to 3,00,000 (33.75%). A majority of the farmers (72.50%) were not engaged in any subsidiary occupation. Twenty percent of the farmers were engaged in small scale enterprises and services followed by labour (7.50%). A maximum number of farmers had low level of mass media exposure (83.13%). Data showed that majority of the farmers (61.87%) had low level of socio-economic status followed by medium level (33.75%). In context of social participation, majority of the farmers had nil social participation (73.75%). In case of extension contact, more than 50% of the farmers (51.88%) had low level of extension contacts followed by medium (35.00%) and high (13.12%).

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the farmers

Variables	Hisar (n = 80)	Kurukshetra (N = 80)	Total (n = 160)
Age			
Up to 35 years age group	29 (36.25)	19 (23.75)	48 (30.00)
36-50 years age group	24 (30.00)	34 (42.50)	58 (36.25)
Above 50 years age group	27 (33.75)	27 (33.75)	54 (33.75)
Level of education			
Illiterate	12 (15.00)	15 (18.75)	27 (16.88)
Up to primary school	4 (5.00)	2 (2.50)	6 (3.75)
Middle school	15 (18.75)	14 (17.50)	29 (18.13)
Secondary	16 (20.00)	28 (35.00)	44 (27.50)
Senior Secondary and above	33 (41.25)	21 (26.25)	54 (33.75)
Caste			
General	70 (87.50)	49 (61.25)	119 (74.38)
Backward	4 (5.00)	23 (28.75)	27 (16.88)
Scheduled	6 (7.50)	8 (10.00)	14 (8.75)
Type of family			
Nuclear	34 (42.50)	49 (61.25)	83 (51.88)
Joint	46 (57.50)	31 (38.75)	77 (48.12)
Size of family			
Up to 4 members	27 (33.75)	35 (43.75)	62 (38.75)
Between 5 to 8 members	43 (53.75)	30 (37.50)	73 (45.63)
Above 8 members	10 (12.50)	15 (18.75)	25 (15.63)
Size of land holding			
Marginal (up to 2.5 acres)	3 (3.75)	14 (17.50)	17 (10.63)
Small (2.6-5.0 acres)	32 (40.00)	25 (31.25)	57 (35.63)
Semi-medium (5.1-10.0 acres)	27 (33.75)	23 (28.75)	50 (31.25)
Medium (10.1-25.0 acres)	18 (22.50)	18 (22.50)	36 (22.50)
Subsidiary Occupation			
Nil	56 (70.00)	60 (75.00)	116 (72.50)
Labour	6 (7.50)	6 (7.50)	12 (7.50)
Small scale enterprises and services	18 (22.50)	14 (17.50)	32 (20.00)
Annual income			
Up to Rs. 1,50,000/-	26 (32.50)	22 (27.50)	48 (30.00)
Rs. 1,50,000-3,00,000/-	24 (30.00)	30 (37.50)	54 (33.75)
Above Rs. 3,00,000/-	30 (37.50)	28 (35.00)	58 (36.25)
Social Participation			
Nil	50 (62.50)	68 (85.00)	118 (73.75)
Low (1-2)	15 (18.75)	12 (15.00)	27 (16.88)
Medium (>2)	15 (18.75)	0	15 (9.37)
Extension Contact			
Low (up to 8)	29 (36.25)	54 (67.50)	83 (51.88)
Medium (9-16)	33 (41.25)	23 (28.75)	56 (35.00)
High (17 and above)	18 (22.50)	3 (3.75)	21 (13.12)
Mass Media Exposure			
Low (up to 5)	65 (81.25)	68 (85.00)	133 (83.13)
Medium (6-10)	11 (13.75)	8 (10.00)	19 (11.87)
High (above 10)	4 (5.00)	4 (5.00)	8 (5.00)
Socio-economic status			
Low (12-18)	47 (58.75)	52 (65.00)	99 (61.87)
Medium (19-24)	28 (35.00)	26 (32.50)	54 (33.75)
High (24-31)	5 (6.25)	2 (2.50)	7 (4.38)

Figures in parentheses represent percentage

Consumer awareness

Since last few years, the government is according high priority to the consumer education through its concerted efforts. But government can act only as catalyst in providing a suitable administrative, legal and educational framework to the consumers. It cannot succeed until or unless real initiative comes from the people themselves. They must participate and exercise their rights and responsibilities more effectively. First and foremost component of consumerism is self-protection by consumers. He must be aware of his rights, raise voice against exploitation and seek

redressal of his grievances. His consciousness determines the effectiveness of consumerism (Singh and Chadah, 2016) [6].

Consumer education facilitates to teach people how to seek out, use and evaluate consumer information so that they can improve their ability to purchase or consume products and services they seem most likely to enhance their well beings. Thus consumer education will change consumer behaviour by making them alert buyers, who complain when cheated, make comparisons before purchasing, purchase from

markets providing information and buy less harmful products.

An effort is made to study the nature and extent of consumer awareness in the rural areas and the factors associated with this. Results in this regard are presented under the following sub-heading *i.e.* awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities.

Awareness of consumer rights among farmers

Consumer Protection Act, 1986 seeks to protect the rights of consumers. Awareness of the rights is a pre-requisite for the further use of act by the consumers. Awareness of the consumers of these rights was assessed and results in this regard are presented in Table 2 and are explained as under:

Right to protection: Means right to be protected against the marketing of products, production process and services which are hazardous to life and property. Accordingly, manufacturers and shopkeepers are not to sell sub-standard goods. A clear marking must be provided for dangerous mis-use. When the respondents were asked about whether they knew about their right in this regard, more than one-third of the farmers (35.63%) were fully aware about this. And only 18.13% respondents were aware and that too partially as they had only a vague idea that in case there is any harm, they can approach the court. They were not aware that the manufacturers and shopkeepers are responsible for the safety of consumers.

Right to know: Right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices. It was observed that nearly one-third of the farmers (32.50%) had awareness about the right. Nearly half of the farmers (46.25%) did not know that they could insist to the shopkeepers on getting all the information or service before making a choice for a decision to purchase.

Right to choose: Consumer should be able to select quality products from a range of products and services offered at competitive prices. Only 27.50% of respondents were partially aware about this right. In this regard, the rural consumers were found to be very much disadvantaged. In rural shops, they could not find products of different varieties and price and have to buy whatever is available.

Right to be heard: It means right to representation, to be consulted and involved in decision affecting the consumers. It also includes right to be assured that consumers' interest will receive due consideration at appropriate forums. Data in Table 2 shows that only 22.50% respondents were aware and that too partially of the right to be heard and receive due consideration.

Priyanka and Zeenia (2007) ^[4] conducted a survey to know the awareness about consumer rights. Of the 400 respondents selected, 68 from the uneducated people and 34 from the educated people were found to be not aware about their rights as consumer.

Table 2: Awareness of Consumer Rights (n = 160)

Consumer Rights	Level of awareness		
	Fully aware	Partially aware	Not aware
Right to be protected against marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life or property	57 (35.63)	29 (18.13)	74 (46.24)
Right to know about the quality, quantity, potency, purity and standard	52 (32.50)	34 (21.25)	74 (46.25)
Right to be assured, wherever possible, of a variety of products at competitive prices	8 (5.00)	44 (27.50)	108 (67.50)
Right to be heard and have representation on appropriate forum	7 (4.37)	36 (22.50)	117 (73.13)
Right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or exploitation of consumer	13 (8.13)	13 (8.13)	134 (83.75)
Right to receive the required Information/education to become a rational consumer	4 (2.50)	9 (5.63)	147 (91.87)
Right to live in a healthy/hazard free environment	34 (21.25)	23 (14.37)	103 (64.38)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Right to seek redressal: It means the right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation. It also means settlement of claims including compensation of misrepresentation, unsatisfactory goods or services and receive settlement or compensation for just claims. Comparatively larger percentages (83.75%) of respondents were not aware at all about their right to seek redressal.

Right to consumer education: To make consumers rational buyers, consumer education is necessary. Such efforts are the basic rights of consumers. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (91.87%) were unaware about their right to consumer education and the rest were only partially aware.

Right to healthy environment: This right enhances the quality of life to live and work in an environment which is safe, conducive and non-threatening to the well-being of present and future generations. Results in table 2 show that

only 14.37% respondents had just a vague idea or partially aware of this right and nearly two-third of the farmers (64.35%) were ignorant about this right.

Level of awareness of consumer rights among farmers

Data in Table 3 revealed that majority of the respondents (69.37%) had low level of awareness regarding consumer rights. Remaining 26.25% and 4.38% respondents were having medium and high level of awareness, respectively.

Table 3: Level of awareness of consumer rights

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Low	111	69.37
Medium	42	26.25
High	7	4.38
Total	160	100.00

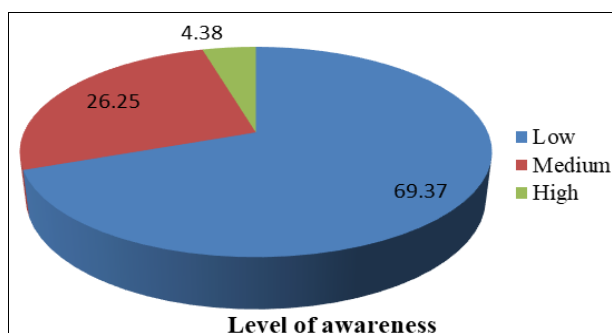


Fig 1: Level of awareness of consumer rights

Association between socio-economic variables and awareness of consumer rights

Data summarized in Table 4 show the relationship between different socio-economic variables and the awareness level of consumer rights among farmers. Age and education level of the respondents was found significant and highly significant associated with level of awareness of consumer rights at a chi-value of 10.32* and 41.21**, respectively, representing that higher level of education was positively associated with increased awareness. The data from the field of study showed that an overwhelming majority of the farmers (96.30%) who were illiterate had low level of awareness about consumer rights. On the other hand, majority of the farmers (53.70%) who were educated upto senior secondary and above had medium level of awareness about consumer rights. Family type, family size and size of land holding were not found significantly associated with level of awareness about consumer rights, representing that they did not play any role in determining the level of awareness of consumer rights among farmers. Subsidiary occupation, annual income, social participation and mass media exposure of the farmers were found highly significantly associated at a chi-value of 18.04**, 13.48**, 20.07** and 11.73**, respectively. It was clear from the data that maximum number of respondents (91.70%) who were engaged in labour had low level of awareness about consumer rights. The data revealed that respondents who earned annual income between Rs. 1,50,000-3,00,000/- had medium level of awareness about consumer rights. More than three-fourth of the respondents (78.80%) who hailed from no member of any social organization had low level of awareness of consumer rights. Contrary to that, 13.30% of the respondents who hailed from member of more than one social organization had high level of awareness of consumer rights. On the other hand, socio-economic status was found non-significantly associated with the level of awareness of consumer rights. It was clear from the field of study that more than three-fourth of respondents (82.80%) who had low socio-economic status had low level of awareness regarding consumer rights. Contrary to that, more than one third of the respondents (38.90%) who had medium socio-

economic status had medium level of awareness of consumer rights.

Mohan and Suganthi (2013) ^[2] revealed that there is a significant association between age, educational qualification, marital status and monthly income of rural consumers and their awareness about consumer rights. And there is no significant association between gender, type of family, occupation and monthly income of rural consumers and their level of consumer rights awareness. Rafeeqe *et al.* (2015) ^[5] revealed that Consumer Right Awareness is largely unknown to many citizens irrespective of whether they are educated or uneducated. With enormous population along with high levels of poverty, unemployment and poor literacy levels, consumer rights awareness continues to remain low.

Awareness of consumer responsibilities

The efforts of the government for enactment of laws are not fruitful unless along with their rights, consumers themselves practice their responsibilities too. It is ultimately the duty of all consumers to take all possible steps to protect themselves before they make a purchase rather than regret when it is too late. As our late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru once remarked "Laws and constitution do not by themselves make a country great. It is the enthusiasm energy and constant effort of a people that make a nation great.

Table 5 presents the awareness of consumer responsibilities among farmers. It is heartening to note that majority of the respondents (60.63%) were fully aware of their responsibilities of checking the manufacturing and expiry date of the products. As many as 21.25% were partially and 18.12% were not aware of this responsibility. Awareness level of responsibility of checking price, content etc. of the products was also found to be almost the same. Other consumer responsibilities about which the majority of the consumer were found to be fully or partially aware are: checking bill before payment and checking weights and measures. Least awareness was observed for gathering information from various sources regarding purchase of any item and using this information to make a wise choice; preferably buying standardized products having quality mark like ISI, Agmark, FPO, Woolmark, Ecomark etc. and of reporting malpractices and voicing legitimate complaints. In the middle level of awareness come: preserving documents like bills/cash memo, guarantee/warranty card etc., asking for duly filled in signed guarantee/warranty card and obtaining bill or cash memo. Krishnakumar and Sakthiventhan (2012) ^[1] study gave an insight into the extent of consumer's lack of awareness of many facts that are of much relevance for their own welfare. Rural respondents are lacking with their rights and responsibility. It was pointed out that they should be educated and trained towards their own welfare.

Table 4: Association between socio-economic variables and awareness of consumer rights among farmers ($n = 160$)

Variables	Level of Awareness			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Age (years)				
Up to 35 years age group	25 (52.10)	19 (39.60)	4 (8.30)	48 (30.00)
36-50 years age group	45 (77.60)	12 (20.7)	1 (1.70)	58 (36.25)
Above 50 years age group	41 (75.90)	11 (20.40)	2 (3.70)	54 (33.75)
Total	111 (69.37)	42(26.25)	7 (4.38)	160 (100.00)
$\chi^2 = 10.318^*$				
Level of education				
Illiterate	26 (96.30)	0	1 (3.70)	27 (16.90)
Up to primary school	4 (66.70)	2 (33.30)	0	6 (3.8)
Middle school	26 (89.70)	3 (10.30)	0	29 (18.10)
Secondary	34 (77.30)	8 (18.20)	2 (4.50)	44 (27.50)
Sen. Sec. and above	21 (38.90)	29 (53.70)	4 (7.4)	54 (33.80)
$\chi^2 = 41.203^{**}$				
Caste				
General	77 (64.70)	36 (30.30)	6 (5.00)	119 (74.40)
Backward	22 (81.50)	5 (18.50)	0	27 (16.9)
Scheduled	12 (85.70)	1 (7.10)	1 (7.10)	14 (8.80)
$\chi^2 = 6.073$				
Type of family				
Nuclear	56 (67.50)	22 (26.50)	5 (6.00)	83 (51.90)
Joint	55 (71.40)	20 (26.00)	2 (2.60)	77 48.10)
$\chi^2 = 1.167$				
Size of family				
up to 4 members	41 (66.10)	16 (25.80)	5 (8.10))	62 (38.80)
Between 5 to 8 members	51 (69.90)	21 (28.80)	1 (1.40)	73 (45.60)
Above 8 members	19 (76.00)	5 (20.00)	1 (4.00)	25 (15.60)
$\chi^2 = 4.252$				
Size of land holding				
Marginal (up to 2.5 acres)	15 (88.20)	2 (11.80)	0	17 (10.60)
Small (2.6-5.0 acres)	40 (70.20)	16 (28.10)	1 (1.80)	57 (35.60)
Semi-medium (5.1-10.0 acres)	34 (68.00)	14 (28.00)	2 (4.00)	50 (31.30)
Medium (above 10.0 acres)	22 (61.10)	10 (27.80)	4 (11.10)	36 (22.50)
$\chi^2 = 7.411$				
Subsidiary Occupation				
Nil	86 (74.10)	28 (24.10)	2 (1.70)	116 (72.50)
Labour	11 (91.70)	0	1 (8.30)	12 (7.50)
Small scale enterprises & Service	14 (43.80)	14 (43.80)	4 (12.50)	32 (20.00)
$\chi^2 = 18.040^{**}$				
Annual income				
Up to Rs. 1,50,000/-	40 (83.30)	7 (14.60)	1 (2.10)	48 (30.00)
Rs. 1,50,000-3,00,000/-	36 (66.70)	18 (33.30)	0	54 (33.80)
Above Rs. 3,00,000/-	35 (60.30)	17 (29.30)	6 (10.30)	58 (36.30)
$\chi^2 = 13.478^{**}$				
Social Participation				
Nil	93 (78.80)	21 (17.80)	4 (3.40)	118 (73.80)
Member of one organization	14 (51.90)	12 (44.40)	1 (3.70)	27 (16.90)
Member of more than one organization	4 (26.70)	9 (60.00)	2 (13.30)	15 (9.40)
$\chi^2 = 20.070^{**}$				
Mass Media Exposure				
Low (up to 5)	84 (77.10)	20 (18.30)	5 (4.60)	109 (68.10)
Medium (6-10)	26 (52.00)	22 (44.00)	2 (4.00)	50 (31.30)
High (above 10)	1 (100.00)	0	0	1 (0.60)
$\chi^2 = 11.726^{**}$				
Socio-Economic Status				
Low (12-18)	82 (82.80)	16 (16.20)	1 (1.00)	99 (61.87)
Medium (19-24)	27 (50.00)	21 (38.90)	6 (11.10)	54 (33.75)
High (24-31)	2 (28.60)	5 971.40)	0	7 (4.38)
$\gamma^2 = 27.915$				

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

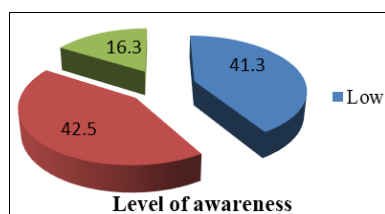
*Significant at 5% level of significance

**Highly significant at 1% level of significance

Table 5: Awareness of consumer responsibilities among farmers ($n = 160$)

Responsibilities	Level of awareness		
	Fully aware	Partially aware	Not aware
Checking the manufacturing and expiry date of the product	97 (60.63)	34 (21.25)	29 (18.12)
Checking price, content etc. of the Products	96 (60.00)	35 (21.88)	29 (18.12)
Obtaining receipt or cash memo	44 (27.50)	52 (32.50)	64 (40.00)
Asking for duly filled in and signed guarantee/warranty card etc.	9 (5.63)	66 (41.25)	85 (53.12)
Preserving documents like bills/guarantee/warranty etc.	10 (6.25)	61 (38.13)	89 (55.62)
Reporting malpractices and voicing legitimate complaints	22 (13.75)	43 (26.87)	95 (59.38)
Checking bill before payment	78 (48.75)	38 (23.75)	44 (27.50)
Checking weights and measures	69 (43.12)	47 (29.38)	44 (27.50)
Gathering information from various sources regarding purchase of any items and using this information to make a wise choice	9 (5.63)	6 (3.75)	145 (90.62)
Preferably buying standardized products having quality mark like ISI, Agmark, FSSAI, Woolmark, Ecomark etc.	8 (5.00)	19 (11.87)	133 (83.13)

Figures in parenthesis denote percentages.

**Fig 2:** Level of awareness of consumer responsibilities**Table 6:** Level of awareness of consumer responsibilities

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Low	66	41.30
Medium	68	42.50
High	26	16.30
Total	160	100.00

Level of awareness of consumer responsibilities among farmers

Data presented in Table 6 indicate that maximum number of the respondents (42.50) had medium level of awareness of consumer responsibilities followed by low (41.30%) and high (16.30%), respectively. Though this improvement in awareness level of respondents regarding consumer responsibilities is a good indication for activists in consumer movement but they have to be made more aware of their rights too. It is only if they assert their rights that their interests can be protected.

Association between Socio-economic Variables and awareness of consumer responsibilities

Data summarized in table 7 show the relationship between different socio-economic variables and level of awareness of consumer responsibilities among farmers. Age of the respondents was found highly significantly associated with level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Further analysis revealed that nearly half of the respondents (48.30%) were from 36-50 years of age group had low level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Majority of the respondents (58.30%) who were from up to 35 years of age group had medium level of knowledge about consumer responsibilities. Highly significant association was found between level of education of the respondent and level of awareness about consumer responsibilities at a chi value of 86.66**, representing that a higher level of education was

positively associated with increased awareness. Further analysis revealed that caste, type of family and size of land-holding was not found significantly associated with level of awareness of consumer responsibilities.

Further data from the field of study showed that subsidiary occupation of the respondents was found highly significantly associated with level awareness of consumer responsibilities at a chi value of 15.55**. It was clear from the data that three-fourth of the respondents (75.00%) who were engaged in labour occupation had low level of awareness about consumer responsibilities. On the other hand, half of the respondents (50.00%) who were engaged in small scale enterprises & services had medium level of awareness about consumer responsibilities. Annual income and social participation was also found highly significantly associated with level of awareness about consumer responsibilities at a chi value of 13.91** and 43.06**, respectively. Nearly half of the respondents (46.80%) who hailed from no member of any social organization had low level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Contrary to that nearly three-fourth of the respondents (73.30%) who hailed from member of more than one social organization had high level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Mass-media exposure was also found highly significantly associated with level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Analysis clearly revealed that nearly half of the respondents (46.80%) who had low exposure to mass-media had low level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Contrary to that more than one-fourth of the respondents (26.00%) who had medium exposure to mass-media had high level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Socio-economic status was found non-significantly associated with level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. It was clear from the field of the study that maximum number of respondents (54.50%) who had low socio-economic status had low level of awareness of consumer responsibilities. Contrary to that more than nearly half of the respondents (46.30%) who had medium socio-economic status had medium level of awareness of consumer rights. Mittal and Gupta (2013) [3] concluded that the level of awareness of consumer rights was high among the respondents. Respondents with high education level and high level of income were more aware as compared to those having poor education level and low income level.

Table 7: Association between Socio-economic Variables and awareness of consumer responsibilities among farmers (160)

Variables	Level of Awareness			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Age (years)				
Up to 35 years age group	7 (14.60)	28 (58.30)	13 (27.10)	48 (30.00)
36-50 years age group	28 (48.30)	22 (37.90)	8 (13.80)	58 (36.25)
Above 50 years age group	31 (57.40)	18 (33.30)	5 (9.30)	54 (33.75)
Total	66 (41.25)	68 (42.50)	26 (16.25)	160 (100.00)
$\chi^2 = 21.876^{**}$				
Level of education				
Illiterate	25 (92.60)	2 (7.40)	0	27 (16.90)
Up to primary school	3 (50.00)	3 (50.00)	0	6 (3.8)
Middle school	22 (75.90)	6 (20.7)	1 (3.40)	29 (18.10)
Secondary	13 (29.50)	27 (61.40)	4 (9.10)	44 (27.50)
Sen. Sec. and above	3 (5.60)	30 (55.60)	21 (38.90)	54 (33.80)
$\chi^2 = 86.658^{**}$				
Caste				
General	43 (36.10)	53 (44.50)	23 (19.30)	119 (74.40)
Backward	16 (59.30)	9 (33.30)	2 (7.40)	27 (16.9)
Scheduled	7 (50.00)	6 (42.90)	1 (7.10)	14 (8.80)
$\chi^2 = 6.496$				
Type of family				
Nuclear	34 (41.00)	38 (45.80)	11 (13.30)	83 (51.90)
Joint	32 (41.60)	30 (39.00)	15 (19.50)	77 48.10)
$\chi^2 = 1.394$				
Size of family				
up to 4 members	23 (37.10)	28 (45.20)	11 (17.70)	62 (38.80)
Between 5 to 8 members	34 (46.60)	27 (37.00)	12 (16.40)	73 (45.60)
Above 8 members	9 (36.00)	13 (52.00)	3 (12.00)	25 (15.60)
$\chi^2 = 2.449$				
Size of land holding				
Marginal (up to 2.5 acres)	10 (58.80)	5 (29.40)	2 (11.80)	17 (10.60)
Small (2.6-5.0 acres)	24 (42.10)	26 (45.60)	7 (12.30)	57 (35.60)
Semi-medium (5.1-10.0 acres)	20 (40.00)	22 (44.00)	8 (16.00)	50 (31.30)
Medium (above 10.0 acres)	12 (33.30)	15 (41.70)	9 (25.00)	36 (22.50)
$\chi^2 = 5.158$				
Subsidiary Occupation				
Nil	51 (44.00)	49 (42.20)	16 (13.80)	116 (72.50)
Labour	9 (75.00)	3 (25.00)	0	12 (7.50)
Small scale enterprises & Service	6 (18.80)	16 (50.00)	10 (31.20)	32 (20.00)
$\chi^2 = 15.550^{**}$				
Annual income				
Up to Rs. 1,50,000/-	28 (58.30)	16 (33.30)	4 (8.40)	48 (30.00)
Rs. 1,50,000-3,00,000/-	17 (31.50)	30 (55.50)	7 (13.00)	54 (33.80)
Above Rs. 3,00,000/-	21 (36.20)	22 (37.90)	15 (25.90)	58 (36.30)
$\chi^2 = 13.910^{**}$				
Social Participation				
Nil	57 (48.30)	50 (42.40)	11 (9.30)	118 (73.80)
Member of one organization	9 (33.30)	14 (51.90)	4 (14.80)	27 (16.90)
Member of more than one organization	0	4 (26.70)	11 (73.30)	15 (9.40)
$\chi^2 = 43.060^{**}$				
Mass Media Exposure				
Low (up to 5)	51 (46.80)	45 (41.30)	13 (11.90)	109 (68.10)
Medium (6-10)	15 (30.00)	22 (44.00)	13 (26.00)	50 (31.30)
High (above 10)	0	1 (100.00)	0	1 (0.60)
$\chi^2 = 6.588$				
Socio-Economic Status				
Low (12-18)	54 (54.50)	39 (39.40)	6 (6.10)	99 (61.87)
Medium (19-24)	12 (22.20)	25 (46.30)	17 (31.50)	54 (33.75)
High (24-31)	0	4 (57.10)	3 (42.90)	7 (4.38)
$\chi^2 = 29.715^{**}$				

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

*Significant at 5% level of significance

**Highly significant at 1% level of significance

Conclusion

The study concludes that most respondents were middle-aged farmers (36–50 years) belonging to the general caste, with education up to senior secondary and small landholdings. Agriculture was the primary occupation for the majority, and a considerable proportion had an annual income above ₹3 lakhs. Most farmers exhibited medium extension contact but low socio-economic status. Awareness of consumer rights was generally low, while awareness of consumer responsibilities was mostly at medium and low levels. Education, subsidiary occupation, annual income, social participation, and mass media exposure significantly influenced the adoption of mobile apps. Furthermore, age, education, subsidiary occupation, annual income, social participation, and socio-economic status were significantly associated with farmers' awareness of consumer responsibilities.

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