

PROTECTION OF CONSUMER INTEREST AND RIGHTS BY SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Superior consumer status is not only beneficial for consumer but also beneficial for industry and whole economy. Nowadays most of industries are using social media as a instrument to satisfied consumer need and redress their complain around the world. Seller get instant information of consumers opinion about product and service at social networking sites and it's allowed seller to reply or response quickly to this information. However it would be negative for seller/provider if consumer doesn't receive the value which they had expected. The aim of this paper is to find out how to social media useful for protection of consumer interest and rights. In this study descriptive method has applied and secondary data have been used. The result of the study that social media is more effective and impetuous sources to resolve the problem of consumer which help protect their rights.

KEYWORDS: *Consumer, Consumer Rights, Social Media Communication.*

Introduction

Communication is a process to have an interaction or exchange of ideas, opinions, facts, information, etc among all human beings to achieve mutual understanding .In another word communication is the way of transmitting information, ideas, knowledge from one person to another. today's we can be send and received message by social media in any part of the world whatever, it's may be rural area or urban area. With the help of social media the world as become more connected. Social media has more impactful and faster than print media because social media is audio visual tools of communication. Social media site allows users to connect and share message, audio, video with people who have similar interests and backgrounds. Facebook, whatsapp, twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn are the most popular examples of a social network website. In whole world most of industries are using social media as a business tool. However, social media instrument not only used in e - commerce for purchases goods and services but also useful for getting information about quality, price of goods, characteristics of goods and services. We can also know experience of other person about goods and services. If consumer don't receive the value which they had expected when he /she can also do complain online on this social sites. Seller get instant information of consumer' s complain about product and service at social networking sites and it's allowed seller to reply or response quickly to this information. Social network provide a channel to doing complain and redressal for consumer. user-created sites like facebook, youtube, twitter have become most used social sites to share dissatisfaction or bad experience of goods and services with others. The new consumer protection act also has provisions for consumers to file complaints electronically and for hearing and/or examining parties through video-conferencing.

The aim of this paper is to find out how to social media useful for protection of consumer interest and rights. In this study descriptive method has applied and secondary data have been used.

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Consumer Rights

Consumer rights are the rights given to a 'Consumer' to protect them for being cheated by shopkeeper. Every year 15th March is celebrated as "World Consumer Rights Day". The US President John F Kennedy (1962) declared following four basic consumer rights:

- Right to safety
- Right to be informed
- Right to choose
- Rights to heard

Out of the various laws have been enforced to protect the consumer rights in India the most important is the consumer protection act, 1986 which define consumer rights as the "rights to be protected against marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property". This act came into force on 1st July, 1987 through the country except Jammu and Kashmir to protect the following consumer rights:

- **Right to Safety:** The assertion of this right is aimed at the defense of consumers against injuries caused by products.
- **Right to be Informed:** This right states that businesses should always provide complete, truthful, appropriate information to consumers to make intelligent and informed product choice.
- **Right to Choose:** This right states that consumer should have rights to free choice from variety of option provided by different companies from which to choose.
- **Rights to Heard:** This right has the ability of consumers to voice complaints and concerns about a product in order to have the issue handled efficiently and responsively.
- **Right to Seek Redress:** This right provides for consumers to receive a fair settlement of claims, including compensation for misrepresentation, low quality of goods, or unsatisfactory services.
- **Right to Consumer Education:** This rights states that consumers should be able to acquire knowledge and skills needed to make informed, confident choices about goods and services, while being aware of basic consumer rights and responsibilities and how to act on them.

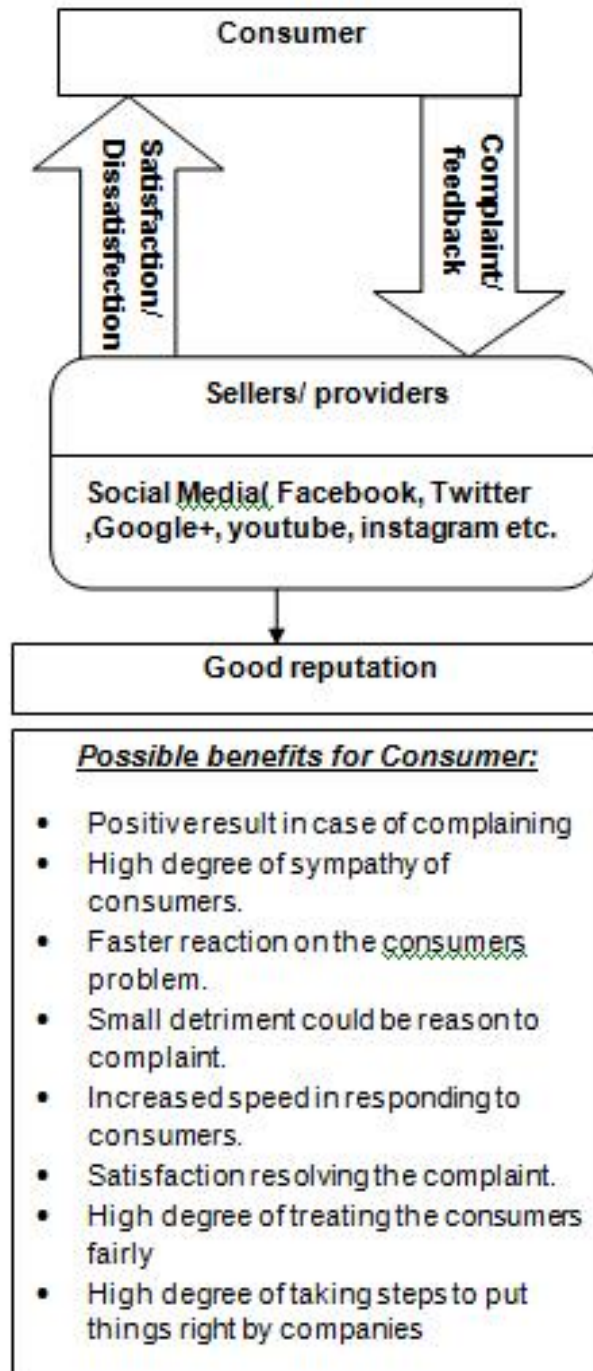
Advantage of Social Media for Protection of Consumer Interest and Right

Social media is defining to be new version of traditional media (television, radio, newspaper). The new innovation in mobile technology and internet based technology gives opportunity to interactive conversation and instant sharing of information by social media in whole world. Social media made a chain between business and consumer than consumer can now interact by uploading their own video, text, photographs, documents and comments to sellers or provider's blog, website or page on a social network.

Consumers can attach related evidence through photo and video sharing with fewer efforts compared with most traditional complaining methods. The Internet decreases the perceived psychological effort and psychological costs of complaining, and this might increase the likelihood of online complaining

Another benefits of social media/ networking sites is seller get instant information of consumers opinion about product and service at social networking sites and it's allowed seller to reply or response quickly to this information. However it would be negative for seller/provider if consumer doesn't receive the value which they had expected. For example, consumers can send an email relating their experience and expectation about product and services or complain. If their complaint is not heard with immediately, they will share the story of their "experience" and send their comments to their friends and relatives and others social sites. its effects Companies reputation could be negatively or positively depending on how they monitor and respond to such an online complaint . Sellers/ providers reputation would depend on consumers' satisfaction level. Interaction with customers is highlight keys of the social media to build and grow long term online and social relationship that companies want to achieve. Instagram Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and Pinterest are the top most platforms used by companies for develop relationship to the customer. Facebook is the to top platform in social networking.

On the other side, social media have some limitations for consumers. First, consumers have limited knowledge and experience of computers and the Internet. They find difficulty to become familiar with online complaining channels. therefore, they prefer to use traditional method.



Consumers' behavior including pros and cons for socially networked consumers and sellers /providers.(the model of consumer behavior is created in case when consumer are not satisfied with goods and services.)

Conclusion

Social media is beneficial for both consumer as well as seller. It makes a bridge between consumer and seller that does not allow third party interference. It makes trustful relationship and good reputation of seller from consumer side. It's not only used in e - commerce for purchases goods and services but also useful for getting information about quality, price of goods, characteristics of goods and services. Social media effective and impetuous sources to resolve the problem of consumer which help protect their rights.

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