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## Consumer Protection: Meaning, Objectives and Concept of Consumer Protection

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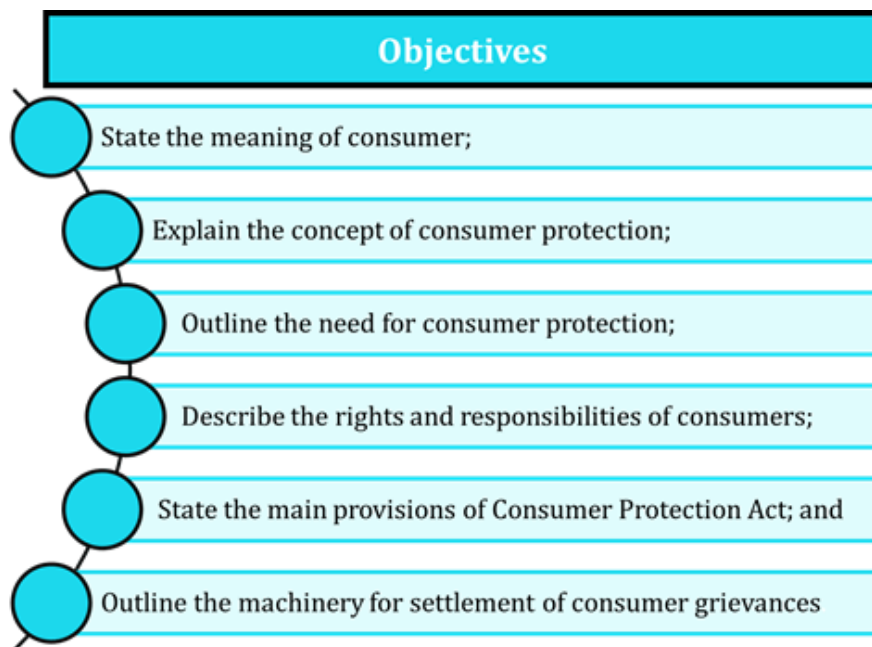
We buy a variety of goods and services in our day-to-day life. Whatever we buy we pay for it and derive satisfaction from its consumption and use. But sometimes we do not feel satisfied with the product we buy. This may be on account of poor quality of the product, overcharging by the shopkeeper, lower quantity of contents, misleading advertisement, and so on.

### Meaning of Consumer

Goods may be consumables like wheat flour, salt, sugar, fruit etc. or durable items like television, refrigerator, toaster, mixer, bicycle etc. Services refer to items like electricity, cooking gas, telephone, transportation, film show etc. Normally, it is the consumption or use of goods and services that makes the person to be called as 'consumer'. But in the eyes of law, both the person who buys any goods or hires any service for consideration price) and the one who uses such goods and services with the approval of the buyer are termed as consumers. In other words, even the buyer of goods and services whether he uses them himself or purchases them for consumption or use by some other person (s) is treated as consumer in the eyes of law. However, a person who buys goods for resale (like wholesaler, retailer, etc.) or for any commercial purpose is not treated as consumer. Under the Consumer Protection Act 1986, the word Consumer has been defined separately for the purpose of goods and services.

### Objectives

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:



## Concept of Consumer Protection

Consumer protection means safeguarding the interest and rights of consumers. In other words, it refers to the measures adopted for the protection of consumers from unscrupulous and unethical malpractices by the business and to provide them speedy redressal of their grievances. The most common business malpractices leading to consumer exploitation are given below.

- Sale of adulterated goods i.e., adding something inferior to the product being sold.
- Sale of spurious goods i.e., selling something of little value instead of the real product.
- Sale of sub-standard goods i.e., sale of goods which do not confirm to prescribed quality standards.
- Sale of duplicate goods.
- Use of false weights and measures leading to underweight.
- Hoarding and black-marketing leading to scarcity and rise in price.

- Charging more than the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) fixed for the product.
- Supply of defective goods.
- Misleading advertisements i.e., advertisements falsely claiming a product or service to be of superior quality, grade or standard.
- Supply of inferior services i.e., quality of service lower than the quality agreed upon.

The above instances show the exploitation of consumers in the context of goods and services. In a democratic nation like India, should we allow this to happen? So, the measures adopted by the government or non-government organisations (NGOs) for safeguarding the interests of the consumers constitute consumer protection.