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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DOES CONSUMER RIGHTS AWARENESS INFLUENCE SATISFACTION LEVEL? EVIDENCE FROM ONLINE SHOPPERS

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the relationship between consumer rights awareness and satisfaction with grievance redressal in online shopping. Specifically, it examines whether greater awareness of consumer rights influences satisfaction level of online shoppers when resolving complaints and disputes. The study aims to identify the variations among different demographic variables –age, gender, education and to assess how these variables significantly shape consumers perception and knowledge about consumers’ awareness and grievance redressal. Mapping of these demographic differences provides insights to support the development of targeted consumer education awareness programs and policy interventions in improving consumer protection and satisfaction in the digital marketplace.

Design/methodology/approach: The present study is based on primary data collected from 320 online respondents and analyzed using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression to explore the impact of consumer rights awareness, procedural convenience, and demographic characteristics on grievance redressal satisfaction.

Findings: The finding of the study indicates that consumer rights awareness significantly enhances satisfaction with grievance handling. Consumers awareness with their rights shows higher satisfaction, suggesting improved capacity and evaluate grievance processes. Procedural convenience emerged as the strongest indicator of satisfaction, while education positively influenced outcomes. Other demographics, including age, gender, and geographical location, were not significant. The findings highlight that institutional and informational factors are more influential than demographic characteristics in determining consumer satisfaction.

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Practical implications: The study will help the policymakers, regulators, and online platforms to enhance consumer protection. Additionally, improving awareness through targeted education, simplifying complaint procedures, and

providing prompt and transparent responses can strengthen consumer confidence and satisfaction in digital marketplaces.

Originality/value: The value of this understanding provides empirical evidence linking consumer rights awareness to grievance satisfaction in a developing market context. The study further offers insights for designing effective grievance redressal mechanisms and promoting trust in online shopping.

Introduction:-

Electronic commerce had a revolutionary change, which has witnessed a niche technological development evolving to an essential world global economic power that has stirred up a fundamental change in the way business is carried out (Turban et al., 2015). The population of internet users has rocketed to more than four billion worldwide, a situation that has enabled the creation of an environment where the sales of retail e-commerce are estimated to be over 1.9 trillion in 2017 and are expected to climb to over 4.4 trillion by 2021 (Laudon & Traver, 2008); India is especially being hit by this digital revolution and is already ranked as one of the most rapidly expanding e-commerce markets in the world today, and the rate of its growth has been estimated to be as high as 51 annual rates (Devi & Indoria, 2021). With the accelerated use of smart phones, the downtrend in the price of broadband providers and a large base of youth the Indian e-commerce market has grown out of its infancy into a full-fledged marketplace where billionaires such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra control it (Chakraborty et al., 2022). Although the penetration rate in the Indian market is relatively low as compared to that of the United States or France, there have been about six million new entrants every month and this is linking even the remote rural regions to a large assortment of goods and services such as daily groceries to high-value electronics (Singh et al., 2024). This growth has also been enhanced by huge foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as government efforts like the Digital India that would provide a sound, secure and technologically-advanced business environment (Mohan & Sembian, 2025). Online shopping is, therefore, no longer a luxury of the urban elite but the need of the modern consumer who appreciates the benefits of 24/7 access, the opportunity to research global brands in the comfort of their house, and the heavy discounts that are offered by online shopping as opposed to their counterparts in the brick-and-mortar shops (Childers et al., 2001).

Nonetheless, such a rapid growth has been supported with the high increase in consumer complaints, as the digital environment enables new possibilities of fraudulent activities and logistical failures (Lu, Y., Chang, H., & Zhou, Y. 2025). With the increasing number of consumers moving to the online shopping platform, numerous people are being faced by the darker side of the internet where companies are lying about the products, quality being inferior, and transactions being fraudulent (Arumugam et al., 2021). In India, there have been reported cases where consumers have received an item such as a stone, coconuts or even a Vim bar in place of a high valued electronics or shoes which they had ordered (Kumar, 2025). Other than the issue of blatant fraud, consumers often present complaints over delayed deliveries, failure to deliver goods, and avoiding charges which only reveal themselves at the last checkout counter (Fan et al., 2013). The very essence of online shopping in which the consumer receives no physical access to the product to examine its physical features, even such as online reviews, poses a weakness that is regularly leveraged by false claims and counterfeit online feedbacks aimed at forming an illusion of authenticity (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Moreover, the issue of data security and privacy has turned out to be one of the biggest challenges and breaches of personal data have subjected millions of consumers to identity theft, phishing attacks and unauthorized billing (Acquisti et al., 2016). Not only do these issues lead to the direct loss of money, but also to the major psychological frustrations of the consumer, the shortage of confidence and the inability to sustain the e-commerce ecosystem in the long term (Pavlou, 2003).

These emerging realities highlight why the essentiality of consumer rights awareness as the most fundamental line of waging war on marketplace exploitation in the digital age cannot be overestimated (Twigg-Flesner & Micklitz, 2023). Awareness has also been regarded as a viable conscience which allows consumers to understand the unethical business practices and employ existing grievance redressal systems effectively (Donoghue & De Klerk, 2009). The legal system in India has found it difficult to cope with the fast rise of online business; the law of Consumer Protection of 1986 has offered a standard point of reference regarding safety but has not been ready to deal with the intricacies of the electronic transactions (Kumar, 2025). As a result, the introduction of the Consumer Protection Act of 2019 was an essential move in a right direction, creating the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) and setting certain regulations of e-commerce, including the liability of a product and a tougher punishment on any misleading advertisement (Banerjee, 2023). Although these legal developments have been made, a wide range of

consumers do not understand their particular rights or how to make an electronic complaint, creating a gap in the awareness of the risks they are taking but not taking any preventive measures as a result (Howells, Twigg-Flesner, & Willett, 2018). Moreover, the cost and time involved in a formal redressal would often discourage the consumer to claim their money and therefore in cases where the transaction is small, the unscrupulous dealers will be free to go on with their activities unchecked (Wu, 2013). It is important to empower consumers with the information to learn how to tell safe websites, learn about the return policy and learn how to use the dispute resolution system in order to build a strong and honest online marketplace (Donoghue & De Klerk, 2009).

The research on the correlation between the level of consumer rights awareness and satisfaction levels with the response is also most applicable in terms of building a balanced e-commerce environment conducive to the development of the economy and consumer trust (Howells & Weatherill, 2017). By knowing the existing rates of awareness and the issues that work to determine consumer satisfaction, it can be possible to create a more efficient approach to protection and grievance management by businesses and policy-makers alike. It has been claimed by research that most of the consumers are familiar with the broad idea of online shopping and lack thorough information about price competitiveness, warranty protection and the legitimacy of e-contracts (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Furthermore, it is in the nature of the unceasing arms race between criminals and crime prevention programs that classic tips, like padlock-symbol-seeking, and might no longer be viable and effective (Acquisti, Taylor, & Wagman, 2016). The paper will analyze these essential elements and present evidence-based research of how perceived risks and benefits moderate consumer behaviour and how the performance of regulatory structures can be enhanced. This study can offer a much-needed backdrop of closing the loopholes between the law and the consumer as it seeks to ensure that online trading remains a source of benefit to the society and reduce the effects of fraud and abuse.

The rapid growth of e-commerce and the subsequent increase in consumer complaints associated with the quality of the product, misleading information, and delivery failures have been thoroughly documented in the existing literature (Anand, 2023; Latoo and Ahmad, 2025). Although there is substantial research that has evaluated the level of general consumer rights awareness (Ganeshkumar, 2019; Geetha and Pattammal, 2025) and assessed the legal effectiveness of redressal models such as the Consumer Protection Act (Lobo and Gupta, 2024); these themes are largely studied independently. Previous research also mostly concentrated on either the demographic factors of awareness or the capacity of grievance mechanisms by itself (Ishak and Zabil, 2012). Therefore, the empirical research on the investigation of the direct correlation between the knowledge of rights by a consumer and their final satisfaction with the response in case a complaint is made is significantly lacking. This is one of the gaps that have been identified in this research especially in some of the newer economies such as India where not much concern has been put on the consumer satisfaction with the end product of the redressal despite the growth of the digital transactions.

Research Methodology:-

The research design used was descriptive and analytical to give an orderly review of the existing online consumers. The quantitative methodology was used to test the statistical correlation between the knowledge of consumer rights and the response satisfaction levels among online shoppers. This design has been chosen due to the possibility of objective measurement of consumer perceptions and the possibility to test the theoretical hypotheses using the numerical data. Primary data were received through the use of survey technique to obtain first hand information on the target population. The sampling method used was a non-probability sampling method which is convenience sampling, where the participants sampled were those who were readily available and responded to the question about their shopping experiences.

The ultimate sample size in the study had 320 respondents. All the chosen respondents were online shoppers who had a prior experience with grievance reporting after having a problem with their online purchase to make sure that the obtained results were valid. The main data collection instrument was a questionnaire, which was organized and constructed on the basis of the available literature on the topic of e-commerce. The questionnaire consisted of various sections each having certain items concerning the awareness of consumer rights, their satisfaction with the redressal of grievances and how easily they perceived reporting the grievance as a consumer. Categorization of the variables was done to enable analysis of the relationship between them. Response satisfaction on grievances was the dependent variable which was the main output of interest. The independent variables that were proposed to have an effect on the levels of satisfaction were consumer rights awareness and ease of reporting. Also, the control variables

were the demographic variables, including age, gender, education level and Geographical Location, to explain the possible differences in consumer experiences.

Data Analysis Techniques Statistical analysis was done using SPSS. First, descriptive statistics were used to analyze data in order to obtain insights on the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of variables. Then Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was performed to evaluate the impact of the consumer rights awareness and the reporting ease on the dependent variable of satisfaction with the response. The method offered a satisfactory amount of evidence concerning the power of the relations and the direction of the relations between the variables under investigation.

Results and Discussion:-

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the sample is broadly representative of active online shoppers. Male respondents constitute 56.9 per cent of the sample, while females account for 43.1 per cent, reflecting a reasonably balanced gender composition. In terms of age, the majority of respondents belong to the economically active age group of 26–40 years (53.4 per cent), followed by those aged 41–60 years (24.4 per cent). This suggests that online shopping and grievance reporting are predominantly undertaken by young and middle-aged consumers. The difference in 26-40 age groups may be due to higher digital literacy and greater access to internet and social media and frequent engagement in e commerce activities due to different lifestyle pattern. Awareness of consumer rights and grievances redressal can also be the reason for such differences. The slightly higher proportion of male respondents can be due to higher financial autonomy and decision making power. The educational distribution reveals a relatively high level of educational attainment among respondents. Nearly three-fourths of the sample possess graduate-level education or higher, indicating that the respondents are likely to have sufficient digital literacy and awareness to engage with online grievance redressal mechanisms. With respect to location, 74.1 per cent of respondents are from urban areas, while 25.9 per cent reside in rural areas, which is consistent with higher internet accessibility and online shopping adoption in urban regions. Overall, the sample profile is appropriate for examining consumer rights awareness and satisfaction with grievance redressal in online shopping.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	182	56.9
	Female	138	43.1
Age Group	Less than 25 years	63	19.7
	26–40 years	171	53.4
	41–60 years	78	24.4
	Above 60 years	8	2.5
Education	Up to High School	32	10
	Up to Intermediate	40	12.5
	Graduate	109	34.1
	Post-graduate	68	21.3
	Professional degree	62	19.4
	Ph.D	9	2.8
Location	Urban	237	74.1
	Rural	83	25.9

Table 2 shows the findings of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis that will explore the factors that affect consumer satisfaction with grievance redressal in online shopping. The entire model is statistically significant ($F = 5.122$, $p < 0.001$), which means that the chosen independent variables combined are used to explain changes in grievance satisfaction. This model has a variance of response satisfaction of about 12.3 per cent ($R^2 = 0.123$) which is acceptable as a consumer behaviour model that relies on perceptual survey data. Education is one of the demographic variables and it stands out as a strong predictor of the response satisfaction. The satisfaction of consumers on grievance redressal is significantly higher among those with graduate level education and higher ($\beta = 0.756$, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, the effect of age, gender, and geographical location has no statistically significant effect on satisfaction, implying that the perceptions of grievance responses are more or less the same across these population variables.

In regard to the important explanatory variables, the positive and statistically significant impact of consumer rights awareness on the response satisfaction is ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that consumer awareness about their rights is likely to enhance their satisfaction with the results of grievance handling. Moreover, the sufficiency's of reporting grievances plays an important role in the levels of satisfaction ($\beta = -0.177$, $p < 0.05$). The negative coefficient is an indication of the coding of the variable meaning that the ease in reporting grievances is related to increased satisfaction. The reason for such result can be that higher education improves digital skills and understanding procedures, leading to better outcomes and satisfaction. Greater awareness of consumer awareness rights and grievance redressal reduces efforts and frustration thus increasing satisfaction.

Table 2: Determinants of consumers satisfaction of grievances in online shopping

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	3.11*	0.37		8.414	0.000
Age (In Number)	-0.074	0.118	-0.042	-0.62	0.536
Edu (graduate and above =1, Otherwise=0)	0.756*	0.227	0.244	3.324	0.001
Gender (male=1, female =0)	-0.054	0.15	-0.023	-0.362	0.718
Geographical Location (Urban=1, Rural=0)	-0.001	0.202	0.002	-0.004	0.997
Awareness (yes=1, No=0)	0.339**	0.162	0.136	2.088	0.038
Ease of reporting#	-0.177**	0.072	-0.157	-2.46	0.015
ANOVA					
Sum of Squares	37.893				
Df	6				
Mean Square	6.315				
F	5.122				
Sig.	.000				
Model Summary					
R	.350				
R Square	0.123				
Adjusted R Square	0.099				
Std. Error of the Estimate	1.110				

#(Very easy-1, Somewhat easy-2, Neutral-3, Somewhat difficult-4, Very difficult-5)

Conclusion and Policy implications:-

The aim of this study was to determine whether the consumer rights awareness affects the consumer satisfaction regarding the redressal of grievances with regards to online shopping. The results of the Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis of data obtained through 320 online shoppers indicate that the consumer rights awareness is relevant in the determination of the response satisfaction. Aware consumer consumers have reported more satisfaction with the manner in which their grievance is managed which is an indication that awareness increases consumer capacity to negotiate the grievance processes and judge responses in a more favorable manner. Moreover, the convenience with which grievances can be reported turns out to be the major predictor of satisfaction, which means that procedural simplicity and accessibility play a crucial role in grievance redressal mechanisms. Education is the only demographic item with a significant positive effect on satisfaction, which suggests that more educated customers can be in a better position to comprehend the grievance procedures and can work the web-based services. Conversely, satisfaction levels are not influenced substantially by the age, gender and geographical location, which mean that the dissatisfaction with grievance handling is not just a demographic problem but a systemic problem. the results indicate that institutional and informational factors more than the simple demographic traits have a say on the consumer satisfaction with the redressal of grievances in the online shopping context.

Although raising awareness on consumer rights is relevant, the outcomes of the research show that the awareness is not sufficiently extensive unless reinforced with effective and convenient grievance redressal procedures. In general terms, the research is relevant to the body of work regarding consumer protection and online trading since it

empirically connects the rights awareness and satisfaction of response in a developing market environment. The findings underscore the importance of collaborative initiatives by policymakers, regulators and online platforms to enhance consumer protection systems within the digital market. Improving consumer satisfaction and confidence in online shopping systems can occur through increasing awareness by conducting specific education programs, making the process of reporting complaints user-friendly, and prompt and open responses. Although the study has some constraints associated with sampling and cross sectional design, it is an insightful study and has provided a basis on which future studies can build on the issue of consumer grievance behaviour across platforms, regions, and regulatory set ups.

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