

# YOUNG CONSUMER

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COMPLETE NEWS-LETTER FOR CONSUMER CLUB MEMBERS

## “I refuse to shop!”

*“So, you have had your fill of chocolates, gifts, and discounts this Divali. The festival season has come and gone, and the market has made a killing – enticing people to buy and spend more. Now, its time to reverse gears. It’s that time of the year again: BUY NOTHING DAY!”*



just for a day – imagine how much money, packaging, wastage would be saved!

### 25<sup>th</sup> November: that’s the day!

On the last Friday of November, millions of people around the world will ask for the ultimate refund – by

opting out of consumer culture. For 24 hours on ‘Buy Nothing Day’, November 25, we remember that no one was born to shop, we pause, make a small choice to participate by not participating. What will you do to tell the Nikes, McDonald’s, and Benetton’s, and the rest that enough is enough?

### Activity:

- Make a pledge in your CC to resist shopping on 25<sup>th</sup> November.
- Talk about it with your friends. If one of you does buy something, analyse and discuss why it was so hard to control the urge to shop.

Imagine a day when you pledge that you will not buy anything. A full 24 hours when you control your urge to spend – whether it is on a cola, or a car. If each one of you were to postpone going to the market and buying things

## That can of cola can give you rat flu !

A stock clerk was sent to clean up a storeroom in Maui, Hawaii. When he got back, he was complaining that the storeroom was really filthy and that he had noticed dried mouse or rat droppings in some areas.

A couple of days later, he started to feel like he was coming down with a stomach flu, complained of sore joints and headaches, and began to vomit.

He went to bed and was not able to get up again. Within two days he was severely ill and weak. His blood sugar count was down to 66, and his face and eyeballs were yellow. He was rushed to the emergency at Pali-Momi, where he was diagnosed to be suffering from massive organ failure. He died shortly thereafter.

No one would have made the connection between his job and his death, had it not been for a doctor who specifically asked if he had been in a warehouse or exposed to dried rat or mouse droppings at any time. They said there is a virus (much like the Hanta virus) that lives in dried rat and mouse droppings.

Once dried, these droppings are like dust and can easily be breathed in or ingested if a person does not wear protective gear or fails to wash face and hands thoroughly. An autopsy was performed on the clerk to verify the doctor’s suspicions.

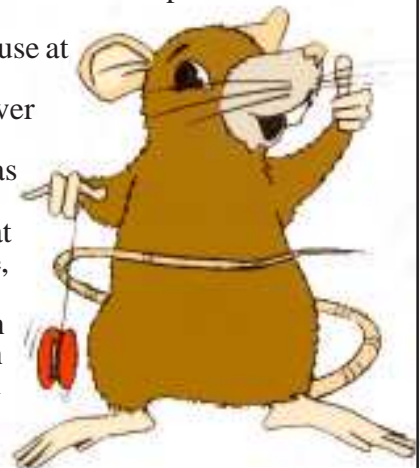
This is why it is extremely important to ALWAYS carefully rinse off the tops of canned sodas or foods, and to wipe off pasta packaging, cereal boxes, and so on. Almost everything you buy in a supermarket was stored in a warehouse at one time or another, and stores themselves often have rodents.

Most of us remember to wash vegetables and fruits but never think of boxes and cans.

The ugly truth is, even the most modern, upper-class super store has rats and mice. And their warehouse most assuredly does!

Whenever you buy any canned soft drink, please make sure that you wash the top with running water and soap or, if that is not available, drink with a straw.

The investigation of soda cans by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta discovered that the tops of soda cans can be encrusted with dried rat urine, which is so toxic it can be lethal. Canned drinks and other foodstuffs are stored in warehouses and containers that are usually infested with rodents, and then they get transported to retail outlets without being properly cleaned.



## EDITORIAL



We are happy to report that we are beginning to receive feedback from our Consumer Club partners. Mr. O. P. Singh, the teacher incharge of Saheed Hemu Kalani School has sent us a report of the 1st term activities of their CC. We want to tell you that we are really very impressed and would appreciate if you too give your school's Consumer Club report.

We hope all of you get galvanized by this example and send us your reports soon.

Our next Teacher Training Workshop is likely to be held in the same month. We expect that the Consumer Clubs will be able to persuade you to join the workshop.

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We hope you had a good break during the festival season and are all set to meet the challenge of your fast approaching examinations and of course, the National Consumer Right Day (24 dec). Do write to tell us how you plan to celebrate it. In case you need ideas talk to any one of us. You can write us at 441 Jangpura, Mathura Road, New Delhi-110014.

## IDIOT BOX

### Thanks to idiot box, kids growing up into fat adults

Parents who allow small children to watch more than two hours of television a day at weekends are putting them at significantly greater risk of becoming obese as adults.

A study of 11,000 children, thought to be the largest of its kind conducted in Britain, has found that the risk of adult obesity increases by 7 for every additional hour of weekend television watched by five-year-olds.

Curiously the study, which was balanced for variations in social class, hereditary factors and birth weight, found no link between weekday television watching and obesity.



The authors conclude that weekend viewing has a much greater impact because it is more likely to take the place of outdoor play and other physical activity, helping to establish a sedentary lifestyle which persists into adulthood.

The ill-effects were likely once viewing exceeded two hours a day at weekends.

“There is a clear link between television watching and risk of obesity,” said Russell Viner, a specialist from the paediatrics department at Middlesex hospital, London, who led the research which is published in the latest edition of the Journal of Paediatrics.

“A lot more needs to be done by parents, but there is also good evidence that you can teach pre-school children not to watch television.” The research tracked more than 11,000 people for 30 years from birth. While most of the group were watching less than two hours' television a day by the age of five, some were watching four hours a day or more, and it was this group that tended to become overweight and obese in adulthood.



## Spider-man Vs Hanu-man

Well, now that the animation Hanuman has been released in theatres, there is a new buzz around the monkey-God who has been part of the Indian folklore since ages. Everybody remembers the Ram Lilas where every year the army of monkeys, and the exploits of Hanuman come alive in every neighbourhood park of Indian cities, town and villages. But when it comes to raking in money from cinemagoers, the Spidermans and Batmans take the cake. Hollywood movies of these American icons who are barely a few decades old are viewed by avid cinema-goers in the PVRs and 3Cs. Spiderman ringtones, screensavers, and many other merchandising heroes and

*“Why is it that India’s traditional mythologies are not so popular with Indian children, but Pokeman, Spiderman and Batman are? Some analysts in the cartoon industry think that that is because Indian mythologies like the Ramayan teach moral values, whereas people want entertainment instead. Do you think that is true? Read on for the debate...!”*

products swamp the markets. How come our traditional Indian heroes: Ram, Hanuman, Arjun or Krishna do not evoke the same frenzy? Some say that is because they ‘preach’ moral values and do not have the same entertainment quotient.

- But is it always necessary that to have entertainment value, animations and cartoons should be bereft of sense?
- What is wrong with a Hanuman or Arjun protesting against what is perceived as wrong in our societies?
- How is it that the American cartoons – created barely 40 or 50 year olds, have surpassed our home-grown heroes in popularity?
- Is this the ultimate culture invasion – where imaginary heroes of an alien society become so popular that they surpass our traditional heroes?

**Does Ram need a PR agent?**

What is it that makes Spider, Super, and Batman so popular? Well, if you analyse it, you will see that a multi-million dollar Public Relations (PR) industry works behind-the-scenes to promote the ‘heroes’ who are actually just products. There are promotional events, music scores, and intensive advertising plans to reach the product to your living rooms – Ram or Hanuman, on the other hand, do not have any such PR strategy. They are promoted by ordinary people, who talk or sing about them in *nukkad nataks*, or read about them in storybooks. Perhaps that is the reason why our 2000-year old

heroines are losing out the battle in this age of information technology. So the next time you go out to watch that Superman flick, compare it with our eternal mythologies, and decide which one is better!



## Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

### Consumer Rights and Responsibilities – The relationship between producer and consumer in a changing market place

**Context:** By exploring this relationship students will re-visit and evaluate a range of issues; their rights as a consumer as well as their responsibility to make informed choices; their ability to seek redress/satisfaction; an understanding of the needs of producers and sellers; how advertising and information are used; how the way we shop has brought about changes in the way we are protected as consumers and how exercising our consumer influence can in turn impact on the quality of goods and services on offer. This is a research project with the guidance below providing a simple framework for pupils to use to research different elements of the consumer and producer relationship.

**Subject/Curriculum Reference:** Business Studies, Economics

**Topic Reference:** Consumer rights and responsibilities, consumer protection

#### Aims:

- To increase student understanding of the relationship between producer or retailer and consumer
- To examine how consumers can influence the quality of products and services
- To understand how changes in technology can change the relationship between retailer and consumer

#### Lesson summary/organisation/activities:

##### Teacher starting points

*This series of activities can be carried out as separate lessons for which ICT facilities would need to be available or information packs prepared. This could be done as project based research work.*

**Discussion:** The opening discussion needs to set the scene for the exploration of 4 main areas and how they might relate to one another. **Quality, Fair Trading, Protection, Advertising, Sales**

##### Student Activities

The scene can be set by a general discussion to focus the students on a range of areas that impact on the consumer/producer relationship. What do we expect from goods and services? From where do we buy our goods and services? How can we measure quality? Who is responsible for quality? Who and what protects us as consumers from poor quality goods and services? What are our rights? Do we have responsibilities? This discussion and series of questions can form the structure of range of research projects that can be carried out by different groups or by all pupils over a period of time.

##### Student Guidance :

##### Exploring the relationship between producer, retailer and consumer

*Use this grid to help you get started on your research.*

Quality	Fair Trading	Protection	Advertising	Sales
Does Quality matter?	Impact on consumers	Legislation to protect consumers when purchasing goods	Types of advertising	Types of outlets Shops Mail order Internet Etc...
Quality control procedures	Trader responsibility	Retail protection	Advertising regulation	Advantages and disadvantages of different types of outlets
Regulations such as British Standards Institute	Impact of trading on consumers and communities	Distance Selling legislation	The power of advertising	How products and services are marketed
Regulation of service providers & Customer	Environmental considerations	Consumer Redress	Information versus advertising	Consumer protection for different types of outlets

*Compiled and Designed by Bhoomika Jain*