

Editorial

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Understanding Consumers' rights

More often than not, the immediate necessity for the preservation of the self and family (read: staying alive) in these uncertain times have relegated a very vital issue which should have been of much concern for the people of this state to a mere inconvenience. Perhaps, the rising sense of desperation or the expectation of worsening social conditions has made the public alter its sense of priorities. The issue; the rights and interests of the consumers of the state and measures to protect them. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was enacted to provide a simpler and quicker access to redressal of consumer grievances.

However, in India, it has been found from a number of independent analyses carried out over the years that the agencies at the district level are working more efficiently than those at the national and state level. Therefore, there is still need of agencies functioning at state and national level to dispose of the pending cases as early as possible by creating supplementary benches as per the provisions of Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Consumers are very often at the receiving end of the poor, inefficient and negligent services and substandard goods on offer. Modern technological growth and complexities of the sellers techniques, existence of a vast army of middlemen and unethical and untruthful advertisements as well as hoarding and creation of artificial scarcity during difficult and troubled times in the society have aggravated the situation of consumer exploitation. And yet, these blatant exploitations can be brought down or at least curtailed only with proper awareness and involvement of the consumers about their rights.

Under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, Redressal Forums have been established at three different levels namely District Forum, State Commission and National Commission or National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. A complaint can be filed with the district forum by a consumer, any recognized consumer association, a group of consumers or The Central /State Government as the case may be, either in its Individual capacity or as a representative of interests of consumers in General. Moreover, any person aggrieved by an order made by the District Forum may appeal against such order to the State Commission within a period of 30 days from the date of the order. The State Commission may entertain an appeal after 30 days if it is satisfied that there was sufficient cause for not filing it within that period. The same process can be repeated with the national commission if the consumer is still not satisfied with the rulings of the state commission.

It must be said that there already exist a strong setup designed to protect the interests and rights of the consumers of the state, at least in principle. The state forum situated at Sangaiporou should avail the legal and other assistance to the public which can be had from this centre if there is any instance where the sellers of goods or providers of services are felt to have used unfair means or cheated the consumers. It is we the consumers whose proactive ways can send a clear message saying that no one can shortchange us.

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"Soft Drinks & Pesticides"

(A drink that silently Kills us)

By: Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh.

A global change in dietary habits has occurred over the last few decades resulting from the introduction of sweeteners such as fructose and sucrose by the food industries. Foreexample, regular soft Drinks (SD) and fruit drinks, major source of High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) or sugar have increase from 3.9% of the total energy intake in 1977 to 9.2% of the total energy intake in 2001, worldwidesoft drinks are the leading cause of added sugar. Recent evidence suggested one association between the intake of sugar sweetened Soft drinks and the risk of obesity and diabetes resulting from large amounts of HFCS used in their manufacture, which raises blood glucose similar to sucrose. In addition, diet Soft Drink contains a s p a r t a m e sweetener caramel coloring, which are rich in advanced glycation end

products for a potentially increase insulin resistance and inflammation.

Human studies and animal models suggest that dietary factors can affect fatty infiltration and lipid peroxidation in various type of liver disease including Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD). More recently increased ingestion of soft drinks was found to be linked to NAFLD independent of metabolic syndrome, with NAFLD patients consuming 5 times the amount of carbohydrates from soft drinks as compare to healthy persons. It is reported that individual consuming more than one soft drink daily showed a high prevalence of metabolic syndrome than those consuming less than one soft drink per day. This review emphasizes some hard fact about soft drink reviews fructose

metabolism and explains how fructose contribute to the development of obesity, diabetes, metabolic syndrome and NAFLD.

The term soft drink more commonly known as soda, soda pop, pop, coke-Pepsi or tonic refers to a nonalcoholic beverage that is usually carbonated. Two types of soft drinks are used: regular SD which are sweetened with sugar (fructose) and diet SD which are sweetened with non-caloric sweeteners (aspartame). Upto 1980s, SD contained most of their food energy in the form of refine can sugar or corn syrup. Today High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) s used almost exclusively as a sweetener in the United States and in other countries, because of its lower cost. Addeed sweetener in regular SD is an important components of our diet, representing 318 Kcal of dietary

intake or 16% of all calorie intake. HFCS made by enzymatic isomerization of glucose to fructose was introduced as HFCS-42(42% of fructose) and HFCS-55(55% of fructose) in 1967 and 1977 respectively and opened a new frontier for the sweetener and SD industries. The use of sweetener has increased considerably worldwide and soft drink beverage seem to be a major contributor for obesity, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, insulin resistance, hypertension metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease. In this review, we sought to focus attention on the impact of soft drinks on the accumulation of fat in the liver. This has significant clinical implications as the percentage of NAFLD correlates strongly with diabetes, cardiovascular disease and diffuse atherosclerosis.

A study, reportedin the Hindu by IMA (Indian Medical association), pesticides % in cold drinks in India are given below.

Sl.No.	Type of SD	Pesticides %	Sl.No.	Type of SD	Pesticides %	Sl.No.	Type of SD	Pesticides %
01.	Thums Up	7.2%	04.	Coke	9.4%	07.	7 UP	12.5%
02.	Mirinda	20.7%	05.	Pepsi	10.9%	08.	Fanta	29.1%
03.	Sprite	5.3%	06.	Frooti	24.5%	09.	Maaza	19.3%

Source: The Hindu by IMA (Indian Medical Association)

This study indicates pesticides, 24 times higher than Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms. The level in some samples exceeded the BIS standards by 140 times for the deadly pesticides Linden ,a confirmed carcinogen .Heptachlor, banned in India was found in 71% of the sample at levels four times higher than BIS standards. The report indicated the presence of an average of three to five different pesticides in all the samples. 24 times higher than the BIS norms, which have been finalized but not yet notified. Latest CSE (Centre for Science & Environment) study is based on test conducted on 57 samples of 11 soft drink brands from 25 different manufacturing plants of Coca-Cola

and Pepsi, spread over 12 states. The level in some samples, for instance, Coca-Cola bought in Kolkata exceeded the BIS standards by 140 times for the deadly pesticides linden & confirmed Carcinogen. Similarly a Coca-Cola sample manufactured in THANE contained 200 times more of the neurotoxin, chlorpyrifos than BIS standards as per CSE report. Three years after the CSE released its first findings on pesticides residue in soft drinks, the new study shows that nothing much has changed and soft drinks remain unsafe and unhealthy. In 2003, the level of pesticides residue in samples from Delhi was 34 times above the same BIS standards, but this time the CSE has found

pesticides residue as high as 52 times in bottles brought in Kolkata and 42 times in bottles bought in Nainital and Gorakhpur. Similarly, bottles bought in Mumbai, manufactured in Thane and Nagpur, allegedly had residue 34 times above BIS standard. The average amount of pesticides residue found in all the samples was 11.85 parts per billion (ppb) or 24 times higher than the BIS standards for total pesticides in soft drinks (0.5 ppb). Pepsi Cola contained 30 times higher residue on average, while Coca-Cola contained 27 times higher than average.

With their reputation at stake, the soft drinks industries started a major public relation offence. After decades of some of the most

glamorous and high profile lifestyle- selling ad campaign, it has now resorted to assuring its customers that its products are safe. When CSE release its report, it stated that it is ultimately the government that is responsible for the weak regulatory framework for soft drinks industries. The issue here is not big multinationals doing business in India but the lack of adequate government norms and regulations. The presence of these pesticides in soft drink is unsafe for human consumptions and is very dangerous to human liver, results in cancer. In our state Manipur also, the ill effects of soft drinks seems to be ignored by many. Now the choice is for public whether they consume or not these soft drinks.

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The Life of Labour: Revisiting Land Reforms; Clean Chit to CJI

Courtesy The wire By : Venkat T. Srividya Tadepali & Thomas Manuel

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Why Punjab needs to revisit land reforms and hike farm subsidies

Down to Earth magazine reported on a new paper, published in the Journal of Rural Development, covering 1,007 farmer households and 301 agriculture labour households in 27 villages in Mansa, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur in Punjab. The study throws up remarkable new statistics. 85% of farmer households are in debt, with the average debt exceeding Rs 5 lakhs per household. Even agricultural labourers are in debt, averaging around Rs 60,000 per household. An average marginal farmer household makes less than Rs 1.5 lakh annually.

The report also says that since 2011, more than 9 crore people have abandoned farming because of the sector's consistent decline. The government's inability to push through meaningful reform means there is an implicit tax on farmers and policies are meant to primarily benefit corporate interests.

Gender and work Justice Bobde panel gives clean chit to CJI in sexual harassment probe After stunning stories by The Wire, Caravan and Scroll, a panel was constituted to explore the allegations against the Chief Justice of India. The

Hindu reports that "The Justice S.A. Bobde in-house committee has found "no substance" in the sexual harassment allegations levelled by a former Supreme Court staff member against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi."

Firstpost reported that the woman expressed apprehension that she was "not likely to get justice" from the panel which not only refused her request for presence of lawyer Vrinda Grover during the proceedings but also told her if she did not participate "they would proceed ex-parte". She indicated that she had hoped for justice from the panel but is now frightened and disappointed that they have not tried to aid her at all.

Domestic workers' right to form trade union: Delhi HC issues notice The Delhi Domestic Workers' Union has been trying to achieve recognition from the government, but was rejected in 2016. Since then, they have been appealing and have now reached the Delhi high court. A previous Madras high court decision says, "Only persons engaged in trade or business could be allowed to form trade unions, domestic workers do not come within the definitions of industry or workmen under the Industrial Disputes Act , and domestic work is neither a trade nor an industry." But Justice Midha provided some hope when he said that in present times, there was a greater need than ever for the unorganised sector to have safeguards and be able to practise collective bargaining. Precarious work

In Bengaluru, daily wage labourers struggle to get even 10 days of work a month

In the seventh of IndiaSpend's 11-part series on informal labour in India's big cities, the Kurubarahalli neighbourhood in Bengaluru is in focus. Every day, there are 1,000-1,500 workers waiting for jobs, mostly as plumbers, painters, carpenters and masons. One person told the website that before de-monetisation, he earned Rs 600 per day, but now earns only Rs 400. Business owners have admitted that they are paying their workers less. Another person told IndiaSpend that there has been a huge drop in sales of bricks since the implementation of GST. Like China, India also has a gruelling work culture

Jack Ma of Ali Baba made news recently when he discussed the overwork culture, referred to as 996 - 9 am to 9 pm, 6 days a week. A Times of India article says that overworking isn't new to India's tech sector. Startups expect their employees to always be available. This includes Sundays, late nights and holidays.

"During the first two or four years, yes, people work six days a week and many a time, for 12 hours daily, or even 14 to 16 hours. But it's not sustainable," one person said. "Also, as the company matures, it requires an experienced senior management and industry experts, who are not used to crazy hours. So then one makes more accommodative HR policies. Today, as a nine-year-old company, we work only five days a week."

Death at work "Govt of India is responsible for my death"

Biswajit Majumdar, an engineer, who didn't receive his salary for the last 28 months, committed suicide and left a suicide note on his fridge that said "I quit. Government of India is responsible for my death." Newslick reports, "Since the Nagoan mill shut down in 2017, three employees have taken their own lives. Since the last 28 months, there has been no salary and have also stopped Provident Fund, pension and gratuity." The workers have tried everything, according to them, including protests and hunger strikes but nothing has worked.

On May Day, India's temple builders demand workplace safety Adivasi and Dalit labourers of Pindwara have been building temples. On May Day, 400 of them took to the streets of Pindwara's industrial area. The workers had been trying to raise awareness around the occupational disease of Silicosis. The Wire reports, "According to the Sirohi district's health department, over 1,650 of these temple-building workers are dying due to a fatal, untreatable lung

121 workplace deaths in FY18 at India's top companies Based on annual filings, RTI requests, and e-mails, there were 121 deaths in 33 of India's biggest companies during the 2018 fiscal year. These include fire accidents, falls, road and truck accidents etc, as the causes of death. In FY2017, there were 96 deaths while there were 120 deaths in FY2016.