Class 10 Economics Chapter 5: Consumer Rights - Notes, Important Questions and MCQs (2026-27)

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These Consumer Rights Class 10 notes cover Class 10 Economics Chapter 5 as per the 2026-27 NCERT book: the consumer in the marketplace, ways consumers are exploited, the consumer movement in India and abroad, the Consumer Protection Act (COPRA) 1986 and its 2019 amendment, the consumer rights to safety, information, choice, redressal, representation and consumer education, the three-tier redressal system, quality logos such as ISI, Agmark and Hallmark, and the progress of the consumer movement.

You also get a 2026-27 assessment note, tables of consumer rights and redressal commissions, the Reji and Prakash case studies, NCERT-style questions with answers, 10 MCQs and a free PDF with no signup.

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Chapter Overview

We participate in markets as producers and as consumers. Rules and regulations are needed to protect consumers, because individual consumers often find themselves in a weak position against producers, sellers and service providers.

The chapter shows how consumers are exploited, how the consumer movement arose, what

Important Topics and Concepts

The consumer in the marketplace

- When a product or service is faulty, sellers often shift the responsibility onto the buyer, as if the buyer should have been careful.
- Exploitation takes many forms: underweight and undermeasurement, adulteration, defective goods, high prices, false information, poor after-sales service and unsafe products.
- Large companies with huge wealth and power manipulate the market through media and other sources and give false information to attract consumers. Example: for years, companies said that powder milk for babies was better than mother's milk; it took years of struggle to force them to accept that this was false.
- Similarly, a long battle in courts was needed to make cigarette manufacturers accept that their product could cause cancer.
- Hence there is a need for rules and regulations to protect consumers.

The consumer movement

- The consumer movement arose out of dissatisfaction of consumers with many unfair practices by sellers. There was no legal system to protect consumers from exploitation.
- For a long time, consumers were expected to be careful while buying ('let the buyer beware'). The movement shifted the responsibility of ensuring quality of goods and services onto sellers.
- In India, the consumer movement began as a social force out of the need to protect consumers against unethical and unfair trade practices. Rampant food shortages, hoarding, black marketing and adulteration of food and edible oil gave birth to it in an organised form in the 1960s.
- Until the 1970s, consumer organisations mainly wrote articles and held exhibitions. Later they formed consumer groups to look into malpractices in ration shops and overcrowding in road passenger transport. More recently, the number of consumer groups has grown.
- The movement put pressure on business firms and the government to correct unfair conduct. A major step was the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (COPRA), which was amended in 2019.

Consumers International

In 1985, the United Nations adopted the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, a tool for nations to adopt protective measures and for consumer groups to press their governments. At the international level, this became the foundation of the consumer movement. Today, Consumers International is an umbrella body of over 200 member organisations from over 100 countries.

Right to safety

- While using many goods and services, consumers have the right to be protected against the marketing of goods and delivery of services that are hazardous to life and property.
- Products like pressure cookers with defective safety valves, electrical appliances or medicines can cause serious harm if not made to proper standards.
- Producers must follow safety rules and regulations, but they are often not followed. Example: Reji Mathew, a healthy student, was admitted to a private hospital in Kerala for a tonsil operation. Due to negligence in giving anaesthesia, he suffered brain abnormalities and was crippled for life. His father filed a complaint in the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission claiming Rs 5,00,000; it was dismissed for insufficient evidence. On appeal, the National Commission held the hospital responsible for medical negligence and directed it to pay compensation.

Right to information

- Consumers have the right to be informed about the particulars of goods and services they buy, such as ingredients, price, batch number, date of manufacture, expiry date and the address of the manufacturer, printed on packets.
- When products are found faulty, consumers can complain and ask for compensation or replacement.
- The maximum retail price (MRP) must be printed; consumers can bargain for a lower price but cannot be charged more than MRP.
- The scope of the right to information has expanded to government departments through the Right to Information (RTI) Act passed in October 2005, under which citizens can get information about the functioning of government departments.

Right to choice

- Any consumer who receives a service, in whatever capacity, regardless of age, gender and nature of service, has the right to choose whether to continue receiving it.
- Consumers should not be forced to buy something they do not want. Example: a gas supply dealer insisting on buying a stove with a new connection, or a shop forcing buyers to buy an item they did not want, violates this right.
- The NCERT example of an educational institute that refused to refund fees for the full course paid in advance shows how consumer commissions protect choice: the District Commission ordered a refund; on appeal, the State Commission upheld it, fined the institute Rs 25,000 for a frivolous appeal, ordered Rs 7,000 as compensation and litigation cost, and restrained all institutions in the state from charging fees for the entire course in advance at one go.

Right to seek redressal

- Consumers have the right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices and exploitation. If any damage is done, they have the right to get compensation depending on the degree of damage.
- There is a need to provide an easy and effective public system for this.
- Prakash’s case: Prakash sent a money order to his village for his daughter’s marriage, but the money did not reach her, even months later. He filed a case in a district-level Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in New Delhi and got redressal.

- Today, consumers, individually or as a group (class action suit), can file complaints physically or online and conduct cases through video conferencing.

Right to representation and consumer education

- The Act enables consumers to have the right to represent themselves in the consumer commissions.
- Consumer awareness through education is promoted; consumers are encouraged to be careful and informed while buying.
- Consumer protection councils (consumer forums) are voluntary organisations formed locally to guide consumers on how to file cases in consumer courts and to represent consumers in the commissions; they also receive financial support from the government for awareness.

Three-tier quasi-judicial machinery

- Under COPRA, a three-tier quasi-judicial machinery at district, state and national levels was set up for redressal of consumer disputes.
- The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission deals with claims up to Rs 1 crore.
- The State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission deals with claims between Rs 1 crore and Rs 10 crore.
- The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission deals with claims exceeding Rs 10 crore.
- If a case is dismissed at the district level, the consumer can appeal to the state and then to the national commission.

Learning to become well-informed consumers: ISI, Agmark, Hallmark

- While buying, we see logos such as ISI, Agmark, Hallmark or +F on covers. These certificates assure consumers of quality.
- Organisations that monitor and issue these certificates allow producers to use their logos only if they follow certain quality standards.
- It is not compulsory for all producers to follow standards. But for products that affect health and safety or are of mass consumption, such as LPG cylinders, food colours and additives, cement and packaged drinking water, certification is mandatory.
- Advertisements like ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ by the government spread consumer awareness.

Taking the consumer movement forward

- India observes 24 December as National Consumers’ Day, the day Parliament enacted the Consumer Protection Act in 1986.
- India is one of the countries that have exclusive authority for consumer redressal.
- There are today more than 2,000 consumer groups in India, of which only about 50–60 are well organised and recognised for their work.
- However, the redressal process is becoming cumbersome, expensive and time consuming: consumers often need lawyers, must attend proceedings and pay costs, and in most purchases cash memos are not issued, so evidence is hard to gather.
- Existing laws on protection of workers in the unorganised sector are weak, and rules for functioning of markets are often not followed.
- After more than 35 years of COPRA, consumer awareness is spreading slowly. The movement can be effective only with the voluntary participation of consumers.

What Is Assessed in 2026-27

As per the CBSE 2026-27 curriculum, Consumer Rights is meant for project work and is not part of the board theory exam. Use these notes to prepare your consumer awareness project. Confirm the exact scheme with your school.

- Project ideas: a consumer awareness poster, a case study of a consumer complaint, a survey of MRP, ISI or Agmark labels, or a visit to a District Consumer Commission.

Three-Tier Consumer Redressal Machinery

Learn the claim limits.

Level	Commission	Claims handled
District	District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission	Up to Rs 1 crore
State	State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission	Rs 1 crore to Rs 10 crore
National	National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, New Delhi	Above Rs 10 crore

Quality Certification Logos

Know what each logo indicates.

Logo	Used for
ISI	Industrial and consumer products such as electrical goods
Agmark	Agricultural products such as edible oils, spices and pulses
Hallmark	Purity of gold and silver jewellery
+F	Fortified food (as shown in the NCERT book)

Consumer Rights under COPRA

Right	Meaning	Example
Right to safety	Protection against goods and services hazardous to life and property	Reji Mathew’s case of medical negligence
Right to information	Know details like ingredients, MRP, batch number, dates, manufacturer’s address	Expiry date and MRP on a medicine strip
Right to choice	Freedom to choose; not forced to buy unwanted goods	Gas dealer cannot force purchase of a stove
Right to seek redressal	Compensation for unfair practices and exploitation	Prakash’s money order case
Right to representation	Represent oneself in consumer commissions	Filing a complaint without a lawyer
Right to consumer education	Knowledge to make informed choices	Jago Grahak Jago campaign

Important Definitions and Terms

Term	Meaning
Consumer	A person who buys goods or services for personal use
Consumer exploitation	Unfair treatment of consumers through cheating, adulteration, high prices, false information and the like
Adulteration	Mixing inferior or harmful substances in goods
Consumer movement	Social force that arose to protect consumers against unfair trade practices
COPRA	Consumer Protection Act, 1986, amended in 2019
MRP	Maximum retail price printed on a product
Right to Information Act	2005 law allowing citizens to get information about government functioning
Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission	Quasi-judicial body that settles consumer disputes at district, state and national levels
Consumer protection council	Voluntary local organisation that guides and represents consumers
Class action suit	Complaint filed by a group of consumers together
National Consumers' Day	24 December, the day COPRA was enacted in 1986
ISI, Agmark, Hallmark	Quality certification logos for products

Short Answer Questions

Q1. Why are rules and regulations required in the marketplace for the protection of consumers?

Individual consumers are often in a weak position against powerful producers and sellers who may cheat through underweight, adulteration, high prices, false information and defective goods. Rules are needed to ensure fair dealing and protect consumers.

Q2. What factors gave birth to the consumer movement in India?

Rampant food shortages, hoarding, black marketing and adulteration of food and edible oil gave birth to the consumer movement in an organised form in the 1960s.

Q3. Explain the need for consumers to be conscious while buying goods.

Consumers should check details like MRP, expiry date, quality logos and the manufacturer's address, and ask for a cash memo, so that they are not cheated and can seek redressal if needed.

Q4. Mention some rights of consumers under COPRA.

Right to safety, right to information, right to choice, right to seek redressal, right to representation and right to consumer education.

Q5. What is the three-tier redressal machinery under COPRA?

District Commissions handle claims up to Rs 1 crore, State Commissions handle claims between Rs 1 crore and Rs 10 crore, and the National Commission handles claims above Rs 10 crore. Appeals can be made from district to state to national level.

Q6. What is the difference between a consumer protection council and a consumer

A consumer protection council is a voluntary organisation that guides consumers on filing cases and represents them. A Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission is a quasi-judicial body set up by the government that hears and decides consumer disputes.

Q7. Why do some products carry ISI or Agmark logos?

These logos assure consumers of quality, since producers can use them only if they follow certain quality standards. Certification is mandatory for products affecting health and safety, like LPG cylinders and packaged drinking water.

Q8. When is National Consumers' Day observed and why?

It is observed on 24 December because on this day in 1986 the Indian Parliament enacted the Consumer Protection Act.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. Describe some of the ways in which consumers are exploited in the market.

Underweight and undermeasurement of goods.

Adulteration of food, edible oil and other goods.

Selling defective and duplicate goods.

Charging prices higher than the MRP.

Giving false or incomplete information through advertisements, as in the case of baby powder milk.

Poor after-sales service and unsafe products, as with cigarettes causing cancer.

Q2. Explain the consumer rights with examples.

Right to safety: protection from hazardous goods and services, as in Reji Mathew's medical negligence case.

Right to information: details like ingredients, MRP, batch number and expiry date; extended by the RTI Act, 2005.

Right to choice: freedom to choose without being forced to buy unwanted goods.

Right to seek redressal: compensation for exploitation, as in Prakash's money order case.

Right to representation: consumers can represent themselves in consumer commissions.

Right to consumer education: awareness to make informed choices, through campaigns like Jago Grahak Jago.

Q3. What are the shortcomings of the consumer movement in India and how can it be strengthened?

The redressal process has become cumbersome, expensive and time consuming; consumers often need lawyers.

Cash memos are often not issued, making evidence hard to collect.

Laws on protection of workers in the unorganised sector are weak, and market rules are often not followed.

To strengthen it, consumers must be aware and participate voluntarily, ask for bills, check quality logos, use consumer commissions and file complaints online.

Government and consumer groups should spread consumer education.

MCQs with Answers

1. The Consumer Protection Act was enacted in(a) 1985 (b) 1986 (c) 2005 (d) 2019Answer: (b) 1986

2. COPRA was amended in(a) 2005 (b) 2010 (c) 2019 (d) 2023Answer: (c) 2019

3. National Consumers' Day is observed on(a) 15 March (b) 24 December (c) 26 January (d) 2 OctoberAnswer: (b) 24 December

4. The UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection were adopted in(a) 1960 (b) 1985 (c) 1986 (d) 2005Answer: (b) 1985

5. The District Consumer Commission deals with claims up to(a) Rs 20 lakh (b) Rs 1 crore (c) Rs 10 crore (d) Rs 100 croreAnswer: (b) Rs 1 crore

6. Which logo is used for agricultural products?(a) ISI (b) Hallmark (c) Agmark (d) FPOAnswer: (c) Agmark

7. Hallmark certifies the purity of(a) Food (b) Electrical goods (c) Gold and silver jewellery (d) MedicinesAnswer: (c) Gold and silver jewellery

8. The Right to Information Act was passed in(a) 1986 (b) 2005 (c) 2010 (d) 2019Answer: (b) 2005

9. Reji Mathew's case is an example of violation of the(a) Right to choice (b) Right to safety (c) Right to information (d) Right to representationAnswer: (b) Right to safety

10. Consumers International is an umbrella body of over(a) 50 organisations (b) 100 organisations (c) 200 organisations (d) 2,000 organisationsAnswer: (c) 200 organisations

Quick Revision Points

- Consumers are exploited through underweight, adulteration, defective goods, high prices, false information.
- Consumer movement in India: organised in the 1960s due to food shortages, hoarding, black marketing, adulteration.
- UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection 1985; Consumers International: 200+ organisations, 100+ countries.
- COPRA 1986, amended 2019; National Consumers' Day 24 December.
- Rights: safety, information, choice, redressal, representation, consumer education.
- Reji Mathew: medical negligence; National Commission ordered compensation.
- RTI Act 2005 extended right to information to government.
- Prakash: money order case; complaints now possible online and by video conferencing.
- Redressal: District (up to Rs 1 crore), State (Rs 1–10 crore), National (above Rs 10 crore).
- Logos: ISI, Agmark, Hallmark, +F; mandatory for LPG cylinders, food colours, cement, packaged water.

- 2,000+ consumer groups; only 50–60 well organised.

Chapter Summary

Consumers are often in a weak position and are exploited through underweight, adulteration, false information and unsafe products. The consumer movement in India, organised from the 1960s, pushed for protection, leading to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (COPRA), amended in 2019. Internationally, the UN Guidelines of 1985 and Consumers International support consumer protection.

COPRA guarantees the rights to safety, information, choice, redressal, representation and consumer education, enforced through a three-tier system of District, State and National Commissions. Quality logos like ISI, Agmark and Hallmark help consumers choose well. Though the movement has grown, redressal is still slow and costly, and the movement can succeed only with active, aware consumers.

Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern

- As per the 2026-27 CBSE curriculum, this chapter is for project work; confirm with your school.
- For your project, use the consumer rights table, redressal commissions and case studies.
- Learn the claim limits: Rs 1 crore and Rs 10 crore.
- Remember key dates: 1985 (UN Guidelines), 1986 (COPRA), 2005 (RTI), 2019 (amendment), 24 December.
- Use real-life examples like checking MRP and expiry dates in answers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are consumer rights?

Rights to safety, information, choice, redressal, representation and consumer education under COPRA.

What is COPRA?

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, which protects consumers and set up consumer commissions; it was amended in 2019.

Where can a consumer file a complaint?

In the District, State or National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, depending on the claim amount, physically or online.

Is Consumer Rights in the 2026-27 board exam?

As per the CBSE 2026-27 curriculum, it is for project work and not the board theory paper. Confirm with your school.

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Conclusion

Consumer Rights teaches us to be alert, informed consumers who know how to protect themselves. Use the rights table, the redressal system and the case studies for your project, and practise these habits every time you shop.

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Author Bio: Written and reviewed by the Nextoper Editorial Team, a group of CBSE social science educators who build chapter notes directly from the NCERT textbook and past board paper patterns.

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