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## Impact of Consumer Awareness in Buying Behaviour: A Case of Kailai District

Dhavindra Rawal

Tikapur Multiple Campus, Far Western University, Nepal

Email: rawald786@gmail.com

### Abstract

This study examines the impacts of consumer rights awareness on buying behaviour in Kailali district of Nepal. The empirical study has collected data from primary sources based on a convenience sample of 418 consumers in different locations in Kailali district with a structured questionnaire to measure consumer awareness regarding the four basic consumer rights and their buying behaviour, utilizing a five-point Likert scale for measurement. The overall findings show that there is a significant positive association between consumers' awareness rights and their buying behaviour. Moreover, the study indicated that the four dimensions of consumer rights imposed a positive impact on consumer buying behaviour. The study investigated the status of consumer rights awareness as the most important factor of changing consumer behaviour. The outcomes of the study can be important to understand the consumer rights and effect on their purchase behaviour and provide the reference to consumers, consumer forums, business firms, government units, policymakers, and researchers.

**Keywords:** Consumer awareness, consumer buying behaviour, consumer protection, consumer rights, market exploitation

### Introduction

Buying behaviour is concerned with factors that influence product purchase decisions and product usage. In other words, consumer buying behaviour is affected by several factors such as economic, socio-cultural, demographic, psychological, etc. Perception is a psychological factor that affects buying behaviour of consumer and marketing activities are influenced by consumer perception. Consumer awareness and knowledge have become critical elements in changing the attitude and behaviour of consumers towards products, which in turn is required to make the growth in the markets (Freeland & Nitzke, 2002; Solar et al., 2002). Consumer behaviour

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is influenced by the mental process that occurs outside of conscious awareness (Chartrand, 2005). Furthermore, he stated that consumer's awareness (either consciously or unconsciously) precedes the modification, elimination, control and change in human behaviours and decisions. Consumer awareness is a key element to help buyer to take right purchase decision and collect the right information about the products and services. John Fitzgerald Kennedy declared the four basic rights of the consumer, namely, right to safety, right to be informed, right to be heard, and right to choose (Sekhar, 2018). In Nepali context, Consumer Protection Act (2018) focused on right to be protected, right to be informed, right to choose, right to be heard, right to readdress and right to consumer education. But this study basically covers John F. Kennedy's bill of four basic consumer rights, namely, right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose and, right to be heard.

In present context, more problems are mostly situated in the markets and many consumers are abused in the market, as their basic rights are seriously threatened by unethical marketing behaviour. In the Nepali context, more issues came out in the newspapers about the unhealthy business activities in Nepali market. Government of Nepal introduced Act to ensure consumer rights for effective monitoring of market but efforts to control black marketing are still ineffective (The Rising Nepal, 2020, January, 28). Many situations were reflected to weak position of consumer awareness and their rights in Nepali markets. Kailali is one of the seventy-seven districts of the country located in Far-west Province. In this burning issue, Kailali is not remained to immune from position of consumer rights awareness. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the effect of consumers' awareness rights on buying behaviour of consumers in Kailali district, Nepal.

The consumers have also responsibility to aware and fight the unfair practices in markets. They should be aware of their rights as provisioned in the Consumer Protection Act and should complaint for breach of the provisions. A detailed study is needed to the relationship between consumer awareness and their effective buying behaviour (Ishak & Zabil, 2012). Some studies pointed that consumer awareness-imposed significance impact on Consumer buying behaviour (Ateke & Didia, 2018; Fatima & Lodhi, 2015; McEachern & Warnaby, 2008; Thomas, 2013). Thus, studies have justified 'the consumer behaviour is affected by consumer awareness'. In this backdrop, this study aims at exploring the relationship between consumer awareness rights and buying behaviour. In addition to this, the informed knowledge of consumer rights lead to adaptation of ration buying behaviour. The rational buying behaviour and awareness makes them alert about the possible market exploitation and able to protect their consumer rights leading to the perfect consumerism. The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To examine the relationship between consumer rights awareness and the buying behaviour
- To analyze the impact of consumer rights awareness on the buying behaviour of consumers

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub>: Awareness of right to safety has a significant influence on buying behaviour.

H<sub>2</sub>: Awareness of right to be informed has a significant influence on buying behaviour.

H<sub>3</sub>: Awareness of right to choose has a significant influence on buying behaviour.

H<sub>4</sub>: Awareness of right to be heard has a significant influence on buying behaviour.

### **Literature Review**

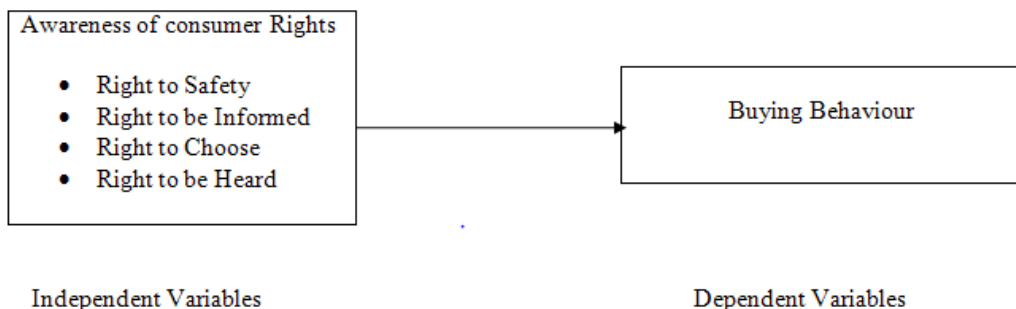
Agbonifoh and Edoreh (1986) studied on consumer awareness and complaining behaviour of all adults in Benin City, Nigeria. The study indicated that education and consumer awareness were positively related i.e. highly educated people have more access and attention to consumer rights information. Solar et al. (2002) investigated results from an experimental auction market on Consumers' acceptability of organic food in Spain. The study focused that awareness and knowledge has become critical element in changing the attitude and behaviour of consumers towards products, which in turn is required to make the growth in the markets. Dommeyer and Gross (2003) conducted a study on what consumers know and what they do. The study found that consumers have very little knowledge of direct marketing practices and regulations. In addition, the consumers' awareness and knowledge imposed significant impact on effective consumers' behaviours. Chartrand (2005) clearly concluded that consumer's awareness (either consciously or unconsciously) precedes the control, modification, elimination and change in human behaviours and decisions. Moreover, effective consumer behaviour can only be materialized through awareness. A study on context of UK concluded that knowledge of the consumers plays a significant role in aiding purchase decisions (McEachern & Warnaby, 2008). Furthermore, customers become aware and have knowledge on the critical aspect which was expected to influence consumers' decisions or behaviours (Hartlieb & Jones, 2009)

Ishak and Zabil (2012) conducted a research study on impact of consumer awareness and knowledge to consumer effective behaviour in Malaysian context. The study found that significant relationship between consumer awareness rights and effective consumer behaviour. The result also indicated that lack of awareness leads

to ignorant and decreases of consumer capacity in protecting their rights against sellers' expropriations. Abdolvand et al. (2014) found that consumers awareness and knowledge have the important aspect which is expected to influence consumers' decisions or behaviours. Another study found that consumer awareness was related to consumer buying behaviour. The study also pointed out the influence of consumer awareness and further leads them to purchase green products were safety, gender, age, income, knowledge, attitude, values, environmental concern, packaging, brand, labeling etc. (Kaur & Bhatia, 2018).

The consumer rights and protection concept came out and clearly declared by John Fitzgerald Kennedy (the 35th President of the United States) on 15th March 1962. After that, many scholars have conducted research study related to consumer protection areas. Many studies focused on only level of consumer awareness and their rights, but these studies have not categorized the different dimensions of consumer rights except a study (Aslamid & Tariq, 2015) on perceptions of consumer rights. Moreover, very rare studies have clearly examined the relationship between awareness of consumer rights and buying behaviour (Chandra, 2011; Ishak & Zabil, 2012; Kaur & Bhatia, 2018), but these studies have not shown the classified independent variable in the different dimensions of consumer rights. There is no research study found about especially area of consumer awareness rights impact on buying behaviour in the context of Nepal. Therefore, this study is expected to fulfil the research gap of time, location and specifically, exploring the relationship between awareness of consumer rights in their basic four dimensions and buying behaviour.

Based on review of literature following conceptual framework has been incorporated. This framework is also supported by Isak and Zabil (2012), and Alsmadi and Tariq (2015).



Conceptual framework represents the hypothesis of awareness of consumer rights and buying behaviour. Right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose and right to be heard are independent variables and buying behaviour is dependent variable. Framework also justifies the impacts of awareness of consumer rights on buying behaviour aggregate and separate dimension wise.

### **Methods and Procedures**

This study reflected the correlational and casual comparative research design. Convenience sampling was used in this quantitative study. The structured questionnaire was adopted to collect the primary data from different respondents in this study. Five points Likert scale was used for measurement and measuring statements were all positively phrased. At first, the questionnaire was designed in English-language but distributed questionnaires were translated into Nepali language for easy comprehension. Before final data collection, a small-scale pilot test was conducted to assure the content validity of all attitude statements in study area. The pilot test reliability of the whole measuring instrument was tested by Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency. The result showed satisfactory Cronbach's alpha value ranged from 0.81 to 0.91 and 0.94 as a whole instruments (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, these all research instruments of variable were used for final data collection in this study.

560 structured questionnaires were equally distributed in different consumers from selected geographical and demographic variables. Out of the 560 questionnaires, only 429 questionnaires were received (131, 93, 107 and 98 from Tikapur Municipality, Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan City, Janaki Municipality and Jshipur Municipality respectively) and there were 11 incompletely filled questions. The usable sample size was 418, which made the responses rate near about 75 percent which is sufficient percentage of response rate for analysis (Cochran, 1977).

Collected data was coded and entered in the SPSS software 25 version. Cronbach alpha test was conducted for all the Likert scale questions. While testing the reliability of the data in this study, the Cronbach's alpha score was 0.96 for all 28 items of dependent and independent which showed satisfactory and acceptable range of Cronbach's alpha value from 0.81 to 0.89 as can be seen in the Table 1.

**Table 1***Values of Cronbach Alpha for Different Instruments (N = 418)*

Instruments	No. of Items	No. of Item Deleted	No. of Items Retained	Cronbach Alpha Before Deletion	Cronbach Alpha after Item Deletion
Right to Safety	5	-	5	-	0.85
Right to be informed	5	-	5	-	0.81
Right to Choose	5	-	5	-	0.87
Right to be Heard	5	-	5	-	0.89
Buying Behaviour	8	-	8	-	0.88

To test the normality of data, Skewness and Kurtosis test were examined. Threshold values for Skewness is  $\pm 3$  and threshold values for Kurtosis is  $\pm 10$  (Kline, 1998, as cited in Musil, Warner, Yobas, & Jones, 2002). Skewness and Kurtosis values of all variables are lies under criterion value. Therefore, all data of variables are normally distributed in this study which is shown table 2.

**Table 2***Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables for Normality Data (N= 418)*

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Right to safety	5	25	0.34	-1.16
Right to be informed	5	25	0.45	-0.93
Right to choose	5	25	0.25	-1.16
Right to be heard	5	25	0.47	-0.89
Buying behaviour	5	40	0.21	-1.04

In this study, correlation analysis was used for examining the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Multiple regression model was used for analyzing the impact of rights awareness on buying behaviour of consumers employing the purposed model.

$$BB = \alpha + \beta_1ARS + \beta_2ARI + \beta_3ARC + \beta_4ARH + E_i$$

Above regression equation was represent,

BB = Buying behaviour of consumers

ARS = Awareness of right to safety

ARI = Awareness of right to be informed

ARC = Awareness of right to choose

ARH = Awareness of right to be heard

$E_i$  = Error term

$\alpha$  = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  = Slope coefficients of ARS, ARI, ARC and AR respectively.

### Results and Discussion

To achieve the objective one, Pearson coefficients of correlation between study variables revealed in Table 3. Generally, correlation indicates the strength and direction of a linear association between two variables. Correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) ranges between -1.00 and + 1.00. In which -1.00 indicates perfect negative linear correlation and +1 indicates perfect positive linear correlation and 0.00 indicates absence of a linear association between two variables. If,  $r < 0.30$  it shows weak correlation; if,  $r = 0.30$  to  $0.60$  it shows moderate correlation and if,  $r > 0.60$  shows strong correlation (Leven and Fox, 2006).

**Table 3**

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Right to Safety, Right to informed, Right to Choose, Right to Heard, and Buying Behaviour (N= 418)*

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Right to safety	13.63	5.19	1				
2. Right to be informed	12.70	4.66	.846**	1			
3. Right to choose	13.86	5.08	.841**	.837**	1		
4. Right to be heard	12.22	4.99	.769**	.788**	.832**	1	
5. Buying behaviour	23.22	7.27	.802**	.799**	.834**	.803**	1

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

According to Table 3, independent variables shows a significant relationship between variables that define awareness of right to safety and right to be informed ( $r = .846, p < .01$ ), right to safety and right to choose ( $r = .841, p < .01$ ), right to safety and right to be heard ( $r = .769, p < .01$ ), right to be informed and right to choose ( $r = .837, p < .01$ ), right to be informed and right to be heard ( $r = .788, p < .01$ ), right to choose and right to be heard ( $r = .832, p < .01$ ). In the test of significance level

for correlation matrix, r value of all independent variables has been above 0.60. Therefore, there was positively strong correlation among the independent variables.

Similarly, all independents variables and dependent variable (buying behaviour) are also observed to be significantly correlated such as awareness of right to safety and buying behaviour ( $r = .802, p < .01$ ), right to be informed and buying behaviour ( $r = .799, p < .01$ ), right to choose and buying behaviour ( $r = .834, p < .01$ ), right to be heard and buying behaviour ( $r = .803, p < .01$ ). The findings also indicated that highest relationship (association) between right to choose and buying behaviour ( $r = .834, p < .01$ ] than other variables and comparatively low relationship (association) between right to be informed and buying behaviour ( $r = .799, p < .01$ ]. In the test of significance level for correlation matrix, r value of all variables has been 0.60. Therefore, there is positively strong correlation between independent variables and dependent variable.

In conclusion, correlations suggest that all the explanatory variables are positively and significantly related with outcome variables. There is positively strong relationship between awareness of consumer rights and buying behaviour. In addition to this, awareness of right to choose has the highest significance on the overall relation of independent variable with highest mean value 13.86.

To achieve the objective second, the regression is used to find the impact of awareness of consumer rights on their buying behaviour. A multiple regression equation was developed according to the relationship, which are presented in the Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4**

*Model Summary of Awareness of Consumer Rights and Buying Behaviour*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.872	0.760	0.758	3.573

Predictors: (Constant), Right to Safety, Right to be Informed, Right to Choose Right to be Heard

Dependent Variable: Buying Behaviour



Table 4 expresses the value of R, R2 and adjusted R2 along with standard error of estimate. The R value represents the simple correlation and indicates a high degree of correlation (0.872). The R2 value (0.760) indicates the total variation in the dependent variable, can be explained by the independent variable. Therefore, all the independent variables towards consumer awareness (right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose and right to be heard) together explain 76 percent variance in the dependent variable (buying behaviour).

The Table 5 represents the SSR (sum of the square for regression) and SSE (sum of the squares for the residual as well as the corresponding degrees of freedom and the mean squares with the TSS (the sum of the squares for the total). F value and significance level are also presented by ANOVA table

**Table 5**

*ANOVA of Awareness of Rights and Buying Behaviour*

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16736.271	4	4184.068	327.736	.000
	Residual	5272.590	413	12.767		
	Total	22008.861	417			

Predictors: (Constant), Right to Safety, Right to be Informed, Right to Choose, Right to be Heard

Dependent Variable: Buying Behaviour

The above ANOVA table determines significance value is less than .05 ( $p = .000$ ), it can be said that the regression model significantly predicts dependent variable. ANOVA table of multiple regressions shows  $F(4, 413) = 327.736, p < .01$ , this means the model is statistically significant. The overall model is goodness of fit and there is a statistically significant impact of the consumer awareness dimensions (ARS, ARI, ARC and ARH) on buying behaviour (BB) in the study area.

Table 6 communicate the detail of regression analysis such as estimate the coefficients, standard errors, value of the test statistics t and p- value:

**Table 6***Regression Coefficients of Buying Behaviour*

Model	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	5.345	0.530		10.086	0.000
	Right to safety	0.286	0.071	0.204	4.014	0.000
	Right to be informed	0.249	0.080	0.160	3.106	0.002
	Right to choose	0.443	0.079	0.310	5.629	0.000
	Right to be heard	0.382	0.067	0.262	5.730	0.000

Dependent Variable: Buying Behaviour

Table 6 determines the regression analysis that awareness of consumer rights dimensions (Right to safety  $\beta = 0.286$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , Right to be informed  $\beta = 0.249$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , Right to choose  $\beta = 0.443$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and Right to heard  $\beta = 0.382$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) are statistically significant and positive impact on consumer buying behaviour. All developed hypotheses related to association with buying behaviour ( $H_1$ : Awareness of right to safety has significant influence on buying behaviour;  $H_2$ : Awareness of right to be informed has significant influence on buying behaviour;  $H_3$ : Awareness of right to choose has significant influence on buying behaviour;  $H_4$ : Awareness of right to be heard has significant influence on buying behaviour) are supported or fail to rejected. This result of multiple regressions concludes that higher the awareness level of consumer rights, higher the level of positive impacts on their buying behaviour.

A Multiple linear regression was performed in order to predict the impact of independent variables (ARS, ARI, ARC and ARH) on buying behaviour (BB). The prediction model is as follows:

$$BB = \alpha + \beta_1ARS + \beta_2ARI + \beta_3ARC + \beta_4ARH + E_i$$

Where,

Dependent variable BB is buying behaviour of consumers.  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$ ,  $\beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are slope coefficients of independent variables;  $\alpha$  is constant; ARS is awareness of right to safety, ARI is awareness of right to be informed, ARC is awareness of right to choose, ARH is awareness of right to be heard,  $E_i$  is error term in regression

model. In this study, multiple linear regression coefficients were performed as following equation:

$$BB = 5.345 + 0.286 \text{ARS} + 0.249 \text{ARI} + 0.443 \text{ARC} + 0.382 \text{ARH} + E_i$$

In terms of each coefficient, awareness of right to choose has highest impact on buying behaviour. If one unit increases in consumer awareness of right to choose (ARC), buying behaviour (BB) positively increases by 0.443 units when the linear effect of other variables is controlled (or holding all other independent variables constant). Next most influencing factor is awareness of right to be heard (ARH). It leads the changes in buying behaviour by 0.382 positively. Likewise, if one unit increases in awareness of right to safety (ARS), buying behaviour positively increases by 0.286 units holding all other independent variables constant. Comparatively, awareness of right to be informed (ARI) is least influencing significant predictor, it leads the changes in buying behaviour by 0.249 positively.

**Table 7**

*Hypothesis Conclusion*

Hypothesis	Conclusion
H <sub>1</sub> : Awareness of right to safety has a significant influence on buying behaviour.	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub> : Awareness of right to be informed has a significant influence on buying behaviour	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub> : Awareness of right to choose has a significant influence on buying behaviour	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub> : Awareness of right to be heard has a significant influence on buying behaviour	Accepted

Table 7 show the result of four hypotheses in conclusion. According to multiple linear regression analysis, all postulated hypotheses related to association with buying behaviour are supported (accepted) in this study. The result of multiple regressions concludes that awareness of consumer rights is positively associated with their buying behaviour. It means, consumer buying behaviour is positively affected by awareness of consumer rights.

In inferential analysis, the Pearson's correlation result of this study revealed that, there is positively strong relationship between awareness of consumer rights (right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose and right to be heard) and buying behaviour. Additionally, awareness of right to choose has the highest significance or more correlated with buying behaviour than others. Previous studies also support the notion that there were statistically significant positive association between overall awareness of consumer rights and buying behaviour (Agbonifoh & Edoresh, 2086; Solar et al., 2002; Thomas & Mills, 2006; McEachern & Warnaby, 2008; Ishak & Zabil, 2012; Abdolvand et al., 2014; Fatima & Lodhi, 2015; Ateke & Didia, 2018). It is also supported by the concept of consumer awareness (Chandra, 2011; Indirani, 2016) higher level awareness leads the rational buying behaviour, strong positive linkages have been apparent between awareness of consumer rights dimensions and overall buying behaviour of consumer.

According to the regression result of this study, awareness of consumer rights dimensions have statistically significant positive impact on consumer satisfaction with reference to study area of Kailali district. Awareness of right to choose is most significant positively influencing predictor of consumer buying behaviour then followed by right to safety, right to be informed and right to be heard. Awareness of consumer rights had positively significant impacts on buying behaviour of consumer and statement supported to more previous studies (Dommeyer & Gross, 2003; Chartrand, 2005; McEachern & Warnaby, 2008; Hartlieb & Jones, 2009; Ishak & Zabil, 2012; Thomas, 2013; Abdolvand et al., 2014; Fatima & Lodhi, 2015; Ateke & Didia, 2018). The result of multiple regressions concludes that the buying behaviour was affected by awareness of consumer rights and all postulated hypotheses of this study (H1, H2, H3 and H4) related to association with buying behaviour are supported.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between awareness of consumer rights dimensions and customer buying behaviour in Kailali district of Nepal as well as predicted the impact of awareness of consumer rights dimensions on their buying behaviour. The findings of this study revealed that awareness of consumer rights such as right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose and right to be heard have strongly positive correlated and statistically significant positive influence on buying behaviour. It means high level of consumer awareness helps to increase the rational buying behaviour. Awareness of right to choose is most significant positively influencing predictor of customer buying behaviour followed by right to safety, right to be informed and right to be heard. All the four hypotheses are related to association between awareness of consumer rights and buying behaviour, which are tested and supported in this study.

The study has been conducted in limited area and sample size in Kailali district of Nepal and also emphasized only consumer rights. It cannot be fully generalized the awareness of consumer rights and buying behaviour for whole. However, it can be the representative of all consumers of Nepal. The government has not involved strongly in implementation of consumer protection activities addressed by Consumer Protection Act of Nepal (2018), and is less concentrated about consumerism, consumer rights, CSR and other marketing activities. Therefore, customers need to be improving their awareness level for rational buying behaviour and right to purchase decision. In addition, more effort is needed for improving quality of consumer protection, focusing on consumer's right to safety, right to be informed, right to be choose and specially right to be heard, as consumers were significantly concerned about it. Today, standards of consumer protection must evolve and stand firmly to address various new challenges and opportunities.

The outcomes of the study is expected to help Nepali policy makers and consumer forums to understand the awareness of consumer rights among the students, businessmen, farmers and service sector consumers with implications for better business strategies and more useful to consumerism. Future research can be conducted in large sample in different areas in the different regulatory, political, socio-cultural and economic environments. Furthermore, the study also can be conducted on awareness of consumer rights and its impacts on buying behaviour in different demographic variables i.e. different house holder consumers, consumer ethnocentrism, and psychographic variables. Further study can be preceded including moderating effect on buying behaviour and using hierarchical regression method.

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