

National Consumer Week 18-20th of December, 2012.

As a run up to the “National Consumer Day” being celebrated on 24th December 2012. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Committee Against Smuggling & Counterfeiting Activities Destroying Economy (FICCI CASCADE) celebrated the National Consumer Week on 18-20th of December, 2012. The aim of CASCADE through this celebration was to increase awareness and advocate socially responsible behavior amongst consumers. The National Consumer Week was flagged off with the “Awareness through Art” programme on 18th December 2012. Students of schools of NCR Delhi participated in an “On the Spot inter school Painting Competition on Consumer Rights” on this day. Over 272 students participated from various schools of NCR Delhi in the Painting Competition on Consumer Rights. The competition focused on the detrimental effects of smuggled, counterfeit and fake goods on the health and safety of consumers. The paintings by the students brought to fore the steps, which can be taken by consumers to avoid being duped into purchasing these fake products, with topics like “Buying a product without receipt—Sensible or Dangerous” and “Be responsible: Insist on a bill”. All the participating students were awarded certificates. The students of St. Thomas, Sahibabad; Mount Carmel, Dwarka and Modern Public School, Barakhmaba won the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize respectively, who were awarded cash prizes by Smt. Renu Agrawala. This was followed by “National Consumer Rights Meet” on 19th December 2012 where Consumer Rights Activists from various states of India gathered to discuss the future course of the Consumer Rights Movement. During the keynote address on the occasion, Mr. Pankaj Agrawala, Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs said that, “The market was becoming very complex with service industry overtaking the manufacturing industry.” He said that a sizeable section of the population was not even aware of quality products. He further wanted consumer organisations to be more active in creating awareness and assured that the Ministry of Consumers Affairs will lend their complete support in their efforts. Mr. Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI-CASCADE said that, “Awareness is the beginning of change.” He said that FICCI-CASCADE would continue its efforts to create consumer awareness through various campaigns throughout the nation. During the panel discussion the consumer activists gave their views and it was a unanimous deliberation of all the activist that the need is to bring about a change in the consumer protection act and provide a mechanism for speedy trials of the consumer cases. A Seminar on “Building a Consumer Rights Movement- Empowering the Consumer of Today” on the 20th December 2012 was organized where the Hon’ble Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food Supply and Distribution was invited to deliver a Key Note address on the theme of “Building a Consumer Rights Movement- Empowering the Consumer of Today”. During the seminar CASCADE, as part of its efforts to create awareness, commissioned a special study on the “Socio- Economic impact of counterfeiting smuggling and Tax evasion in seven key Indian industry sectors” of the economy. The report, prepared by the Thought Arbitrage Research Institute (TARI), New Delhi, made a pioneering attempt to estimate the size of the 'grey market' for selected industry sectors in India and projected the economic loss to industry, government and consequent social impact. Commenting on the findings, FICCI president Naina Lal Kidwai said, "Counterfeiting is a serious economic offence causing a huge loss to industry, to the government and also to consumers. But it is still not considered as serious offence." Further adding on to the subject Secretary General, FICCI, A Didar Singh said that consumers today are compromising their safety, as the products which they are consuming are not of the set standards because they are not coming from the manufacture who actually promised

them safety and adequate quality. The dignitaries present on the occasion congratulated FICCI CASCDE to have taken this initiative and bring on board Industry and government together for the benefit of consumers.