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New trends in Consumer Movement – from Protection to Involvement

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Abstract

“All of us are consumers”, former president John F Kennedy first stated in 1962. We are nearly 6 billions users and consumers on the earth, but only marginally organized. UN adopted in 1985 Guidelines for Consumer protection and defined the 8 consumer rights. Citizens have a multiple role, from own providing of goods to manpower in factories and at the same time be users and consumers. Consumers are a part of the market, without consumption no production, but the market actors still regard consumers as passive buyers and payers.

The consumers movement is not very old, but strong developing. Consumers International, organize 234 national organisations in 113 countries. First phase has been subscribers to test magazines. Some governments have discovered the need to protect consumers, so do some organisations. Consumers claim defect goods. Recent movement is characterized by more active consumers. Consumers question new technologies as genetically modifying crops and animals, nanotechnology, irradiation of foods. Consumers focus consequences of consumption, on health, environment and globally. Consumers demand safe food, organically and locally produced and mistrust large-scale industrialized production.

More active consumers take part in discussions, involve themselves in decision making, act and demonstrate to show their preferences, boycott and demand to be heard by business and politicians. Expected progress is locally organizing in smaller groups, testing and comparing goods and prices. Exchange of results can easily be made by Internet. Internet as distributing consumer information from consumer organisation is a cheap and efficient way of developing consumers movement and is rapidly progressing.

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