

Online shopping: If you do not get immediate refund, you may get compensation | Your rights in Rasrang: Online shopping: If you do not get immediate refund, you may get compensation

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Your rights in Rasrang: Online shopping: If you do not get immediate refund, you can get compensation

Gaurav Pathak6 days ago



Online shopping i.e. e-commerce is expected to have a turnover of \$188 billion in India by next year. There are detailed provisions in the Consumer Protection Act-2019, Contract Act-1872, IT Act-2000, Personal Digital Data Protection Act-2023, Payment and Settlement Act-

2007, Competition Act-2002 and GST Act-2017 for crores of customers and lakhs of traders associated with platforms like Amazon and Flipkart.

Return and refund: In case of defect in quality of goods, the company should take back the goods in a timely manner. In February 2024, the District Consumer Commission in Delhi ordered Amazon to pay Rs 35,000 as damages and Rs 10,000 as legal expenses for the delay of one and a half years in refund. The Commission also ordered Amazon to issue details for complaint redressal on its website.

Grievance Redressal and Customer Care: E-commerce companies and aggregators have the legal protection of intermediaries. In 2013, the Delhi High Court in the KN Govindacharya case ordered all internet companies and apps to display the details of the grievance redressal officer in compliance with the IT Intermediary Rules. Consumers can directly lodge complaints with companies for deficiency in services or unfair business practices. After purchasing goods through online medium, customers have the legal right to get service through customer care.

MRP and Gift Coupons: Selling any goods above the MRP price is an unfair trade practice under the Metrology Act-2009. In such cases, a complaint can be filed under Section-2 (6) (iv) of the Consumer Protection Act. Consumer commissions have passed several orders to refund the amount charged above the MRP along with interest and penalty. E-commerce companies want to avoid legal responsibility by not making payment in gift coupons. But the National Commission rejected this argument and said that consumer rights should be protected even in gift coupons and vouchers.

Fake or expired goods: Many times fake clothes, cosmetics or other goods are sold online. If the e-commerce company refuses to take back the goods and give a refund, a complaint can be filed in the consumer commission. In a case of giving fake socks instead of branded socks, the State Consumer Commission of Chandigarh ordered the e-commerce company to pay a compensation of Rs 2 lakh. The State Commission of Telangana ordered a compensation of Rs 24 thousand for giving expired food items.

Fake reviews and drip pricing: A complaint can be filed before the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) against the unfair trade practice of presenting a wrong picture through fake reviews. E-commerce companies also do not follow the rule of not selling more than 25% of the products of the companies associated with their platform. These companies charge more for the product through additional charges, which is called dip pricing. With many such unfair trade practices, e-commerce companies indulge in manipulation and biased behavior. To break the monopoly of foreign companies, the government has launched the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). This will help in making the e-commerce sector indigenous as well as accountable and democratic.