

Rvey on E-Commerce Product Usage and Consumer Protection in Christ University, Lavasa Campus

Thara Bose¹, Sejal², Sree Dhakshini³

^{1,2,3}LLM, School of Law, Christ (Deemed to be University), Lavasa campus, Lavasa – 412112, Pune District, Maharashtra State

ABSTRACT:

The study examines consumer protection within the context of e-commerce among students at Lavasa Campus, Christ University, in accordance with the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. In the face of the swift expansion of online shopping, the protection of consumer rights has assumed critical importance. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, employing a structured questionnaire to collect data from students about their experiences with online shopping. Findings reveal that though a large percentage of students shop online regularly, mostly on Amazon and Flipkart, most of them are unaware of their rights under the new regulations. Product quality issues, return issues, and counterfeit products were some of the common issues faced by the respondents. And 90 percent of students reported knowing remedies available for defective products, while 72 percent were not aware of the terms and conditions of their purchases. Recommendations should be made in areas such as consumer education to create more awareness of rights and protection, clear information about the product, and redress of grievances. Making sure regulations against counterfeit goods and data privacy are in place is a must for making the online marketplace safer.

Keywords: Consumer Protection, Online shopping, Counterfeit products, E-commerce rules, Data Privacy

INTRODUCTION

The Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, introduced in India, aim to safeguard consumer rights in the rapidly growing online marketplace. These regulations establish a comprehensive framework addressing various issues, including product quality, return policies, and the sale of counterfeit items. E-commerce platforms must provide clear and detailed product information, including the country of origin and seller details, ensuring transparency in transactions. Moreover, they must implement efficient grievance redressal mechanisms to promptly address consumer complaints and take responsibility for counterfeit products sold on their sites.

The rules also prohibit unfair trade practices such as misleading advertisements and unjustified price manipulations, thereby enhancing consumer protection. A significant aspect of these regulations is the emphasis on data protection, requiring e-commerce entities to secure consumer data privacy during digital transactions. Despite these protections, consumers face potential risks associated with online shopping, including fraud and misrepresentation. Therefore, consumer education is crucial to fostering a secure

online shopping environment, empowering individuals to navigate digital transactions confidently and make informed choices.

OBJECTIVES:

There must be an improvement in the e-commerce sites in consumer protection mechanisms so that students from Lavasa Campus can shop more securely and have pleasant experiences. These include programs for awareness, anti-counterfeiting measures, transparency, accountability, proper information, actual photographs, effective redressal mechanism, proactive communication, open review, education of consumers, a more effective redressal mechanism, quicker response, authentication of the website, consumer-oriented approach in services, quality check, and digital rights workshops.

Consumer behavior will be studied, as well as consumers' knowledge about consumer protection laws and rights of the students, concerns or challenges while buying online, and opinions sought on how e-commerce might be improved further. This will be achieved through strict regulations, furnishing of detailed information, use of real-world photographs, dispute resolution systems, provision of transparent websites, consumer-oriented service delivery, better data protection measures, and holding of workshops on digital rights.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed an **Empirical research design**, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather comprehensive data on student experiences with e-commerce.

Data Collection Methods

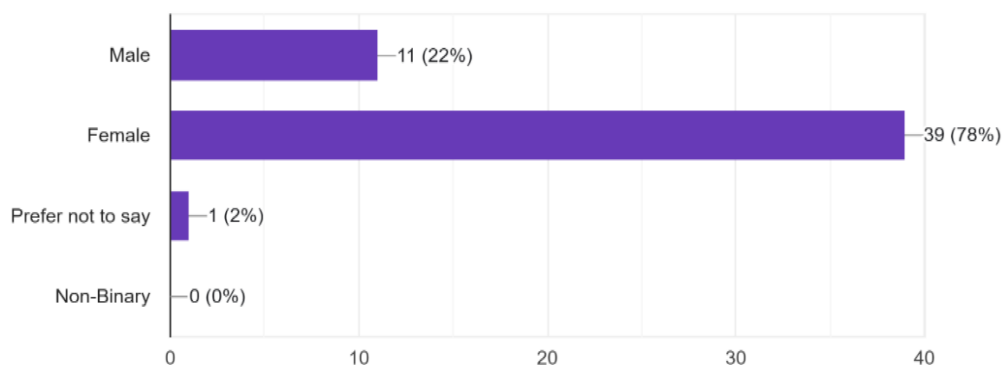
1. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data from students. The survey included multiple-choice questions Like scale items, and open-ended questions to capture a range of responses and it resulted around 50 responses from the Google form.
2. The survey was conducted through Google Form to third-year BBA.LLB and fourth-year BA.LLB students at Christ University.

FINDINGS

1. GENDER USAGE:

What is your gender ?

50 responses



From the finding , we analysed that the 78% of participant are Female and the 22% are of Male.

2. AGE:

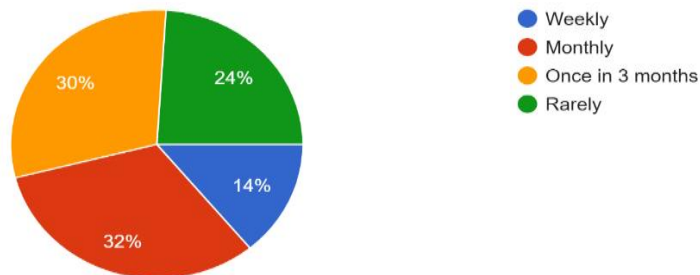
What is your age ?
50 responses



The Age group of all the participant are between 17-25.

3. FREQUENCY:

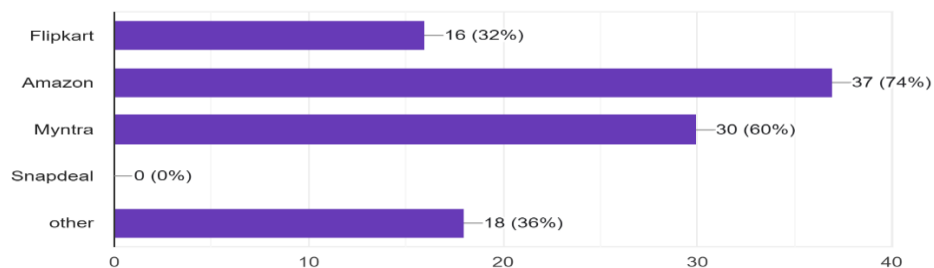
How frequently do you shop online?
50 responses



It can be seen that the 32% of the students are frequently using the online shopping montly and the 30% are using once in 3 months.

4. MOST USED E-COMMERCE PLATFORM:

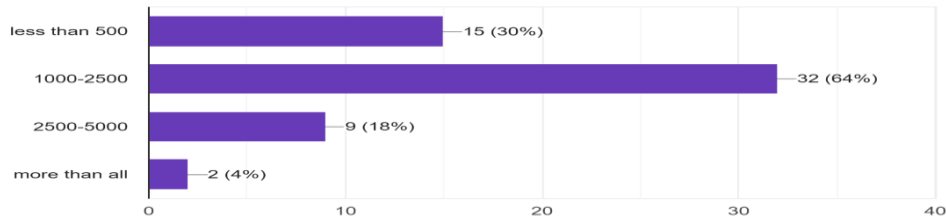
Which e-commerce platforms do you utilize the most?
50 responses



The most used E-commerce platform are the Amazon 74% followed by Myntra of 60% and Flipkart of 32%.

5. MONEY SPENT EVERY MONTH:

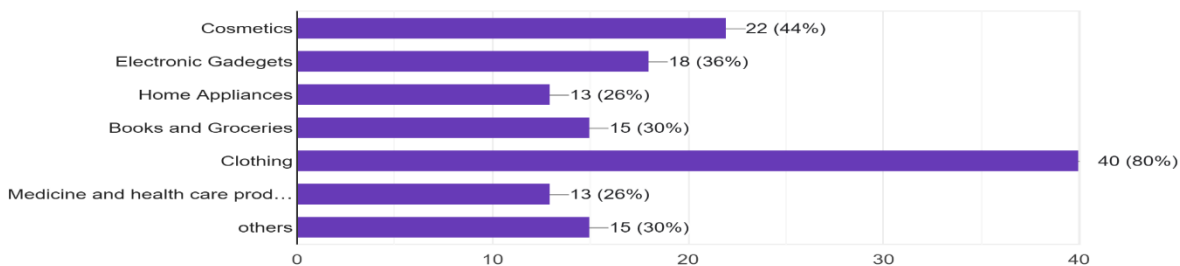
How much money do you spend on e-commerce platforms each month?
50 responses



The 64% of the students are spending money shopping of 1000-2500 rupees and the 30% of less than 500 rupees , the least number of students only spends more than 5000 rupees of monthly.

6. POPULAR THINGS BOUGHT:

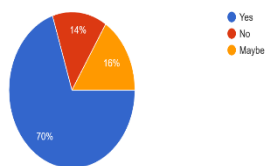
What are the most popular types of things you buy online?
50 responses



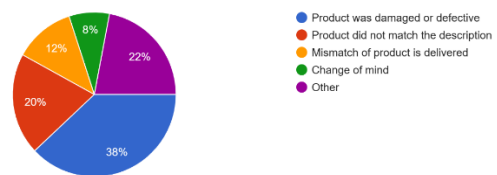
The most purchased goods are 80% of clothing , then 44% of cosmetics and the 36% are of the electronic gadegets.

7. RETURN:

Have you returned any product which has been purchased by you ?
50 responses



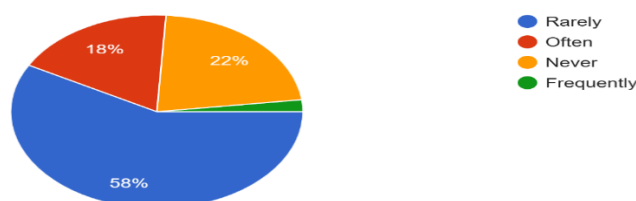
If so, what was the reason you returned the product?
50 responses



70% of the students returned the product purchased in online platform. The reason is 38% of the student returned the product due to damaged or defective.

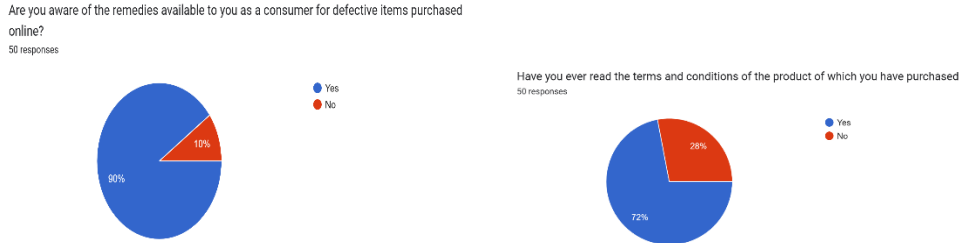
8. ISSUES FACED ON RETURN OR REFUND:

How often have you faced issues with refunds or returns from e-commerce platforms?
50 responses



The 58% of the students are rarely facing issue with refunds or return from the e-commerce platforms.

9.AWARENESS ABOUT REMEDIES FOR DEFECTIVE ITEMS PURCHASED:

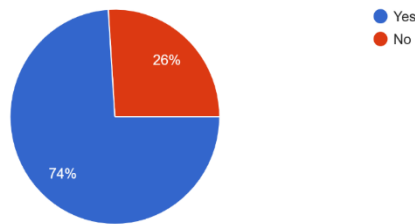


The 90% of the students are aware of the remedies for the defective items.

72% of the student are well aware of the terms and conditions of the product that they purchased.

10.COMPLAINT THROUGH CONSUMER PROTECTION PORTAL:

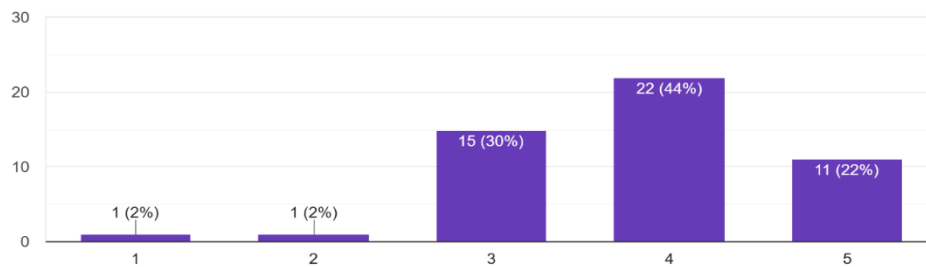
Have you experienced any E-commerce-related concerns, would you be ready to make a complaint through the consumer protection portal (<https://consumerhelpline.gov.in/>)?
50 responses



The 74% of the student are ready to make complaint through the consumer protection portal with e-commerce related issues.

11.RATINGS:

How would you like to rate the e-commerce platform ?
50 responses



It is concluded that the 44% of the students are rated 4 out of 5 and the 30% of student rated 3 out of 5.

ANALYSIS:

The survey conducted on e-commerce product usage and consumer protection among students at Lavasa Campus, Christ University, provides valuable insights into consumer behavior, awareness of rights, and challenges faced in the online shopping environment. The survey revealed that a significant majority of students actively engage in online shopping, with Amazon and Flipkart being the most frequently used

platforms.

The survey revealed that while some students have a basic understanding of their consumer rights, many are not fully aware of specific protections available to them under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. These rules aim to enhance transparency and accountability in online transactions, but awareness of these regulations is still lacking among consumers.

Challenges faced by consumers include return and refund issues, concerns about product quality, and concerns about counterfeit or substandard products. To enhance consumer experiences in e-commerce, several recommendations can be made:

1. Enhanced consumer education: E-commerce platforms should implement educational initiatives to inform consumers about their rights under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules. Workshops and informational campaigns could help bridge knowledge gaps.
2. Improved transparency: E-commerce entities must ensure that all relevant information regarding products, sellers, and return policies is clearly communicated to consumers. This aligns with the transparency requirements mandated by the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules.
3. Streamlined grievance redressal: Establishing efficient complaint handling systems with clear timelines for resolution can improve consumer trust. Platforms should appoint dedicated grievance officers whose contact details are easily accessible.
4. Stricter regulations against counterfeit products: E-commerce platforms should strengthen measures to prevent the sale of counterfeit goods by implementing rigorous seller verification processes and monitoring product listings more closely.

In conclusion, the survey results highlight a critical need for improved consumer protection measures within the e-commerce landscape at Lavasa Campus. By enhancing education on these rights and improving transparency and grievance mechanisms in line with regulatory frameworks like the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, stakeholders can foster a safer and more reliable online shopping environment for consumers.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The survey on e-commerce product usage and consumer protection at Lavasa Campus, Christ University, revealed that number of students shopping online frequently. Amazon emerged as the most popular e-commerce platform, followed by Flipkart and Myntra. Challenges faced during the return process included slow processing times and unclear return policies.

While some students demonstrated awareness of their consumer rights, many lacked detailed knowledge about specific protections available under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. Awareness of grievance redressal mechanisms was also limited. Common concerns about e-commerce included issues related to product quality, counterfeit goods, and data privacy.

To enhance consumer protection and improve the overall e-commerce experience for students, recommendations include enhancing consumer education, improving transparency in transactions, strengthening grievance redressal mechanisms, implementing stricter regulations against counterfeit products, promoting data privacy and security, facilitating faster return processes, encouraging authentic reviews, establishing a regular feedback mechanism, organizing workshops on digital rights, and adopting a consumer-centric approach in service delivery.

CONCLUSION:

The survey on e-commerce product usage and consumer protection at Lavasa Campus, Christ University, reveals that students face challenges in online shopping, particularly regarding product returns, refunds, and counterfeit goods. Despite some familiarity with consumer rights under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, many students lack detailed knowledge about remedies. To address these issues, e-commerce platforms and educational institutions should collaborate on initiatives enhancing consumer education and awareness, implementing clear communication strategies, strengthening regulations against counterfeit products, and improving data privacy measures.