

# A Study on Exploring Laws Governing E-Commerce And Fraud

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**Abstract-** *E-Commerce has significantly transformed as global commerce. As more people shop online, e-commerce has become a huge target for scammers. While it's convenient to buy things with a click, it has also opened the door to problems like identity theft, fake websites, and credit card fraud. This paper looks at how we can make online shopping safer by focusing on three main areas: better laws, smarter technology, and more aware shoppers. In this research, current laws like the Consumer Protection Act and the newest 2025 guidelines were looked into. Meanwhile the laws are getting stronger, there is still a big gap because many shoppers don't know how to protect themselves. This Paper explored how technology like AI and simple steps like two-factor authentication can act as a shield against hackers and identity thieves*

**Keywords:** E-Commerce, Fraud, Scammer, Consumer Protection Act 2019, Hacking, Consumers, Digital, Protection.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) refers to the buying and selling of goods and services through digital platforms using the internet. With rapid technological advancement and increased internet accessibility, e-commerce has transformed traditional modes of trade by enabling consumers to purchase products and services conveniently from any location. Online marketplaces offer advantages such as time efficiency, wider product choice, multiple payment options, and ease of comparison, making them an integral part of the modern economy. The importance of e-commerce became even more evident during periods such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where restrictions on physical movement led to a significant rise in online shopping for essential goods, food, and pharmaceutical products. The exponential growth of digital transactions has contributed substantially to national and global economic development. However, the increasing reliance on online platforms has also resulted in a corresponding rise in fraudulent activities within the e-commerce ecosystem.

E-commerce fraud includes deceptive practices such as identity theft, payment fraud, phishing, fake sellers, misuse of personal data, and unauthorized transactions. These fraudulent activities pose serious risks to consumers, businesses, and the overall trust in digital commerce. Fraud can occur at different stages of an online transaction and may involve complex patterns of consumer behaviour that are difficult to detect and prevent in real time. While technological tools such as data analytics and automated detection systems are increasingly used to identify fraudulent behaviour, legal frameworks play a crucial role in regulating e-commerce activities and providing remedies against fraud. Laws governing information technology, consumer protection, data privacy, and cybercrime aim to safeguard consumer interests and ensure accountability of e-commerce platforms. However, the dynamic nature of technology often creates challenges in enforcement and leaves gaps in existing legal provisions. The rapid expansion of e-commerce has fundamentally altered the traditional buyer-seller relationship, introducing new legal challenges related to transparency, accountability, and trust in digital transactions.

Unlike conventional commerce, e-commerce operates through intermediaries such as online marketplaces, payment gateways, and logistics providers, making the determination of liability in cases of fraud legally complex. The anonymity of the internet and ease of creating fake seller identities have contributed to the rise of sophisticated fraudulent practices that are difficult to trace and regulate effectively. In India, the legal regulation of e-commerce fraud is primarily governed by a combination of statutes such as the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, rather than a single comprehensive law. Judicial interpretation has played a significant role in shaping the responsibilities of e-commerce platforms, particularly with respect to intermediary liability and due diligence obligations. Despite the existence of multiple legal frameworks, enforcement challenges and lack of consumer awareness continue to undermine the effectiveness of legal protections against online fraud. Therefore, a critical legal examination of existing laws, judicial decisions, and regulatory mechanisms is essential to

understand their adequacy in addressing the growing problem of e-commerce fraud.

## II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed the way consumers buy goods and services by offering convenience, accessibility, and a wide range of choices. With the increasing use of digital platforms for shopping and online payments, e-commerce has become an integral part of modern economic activity. However, this rapid expansion has also led to a significant rise in online frauds such as fake or defective products, non-delivery of goods, payment fraud, identity theft, and misuse of personal data. These fraudulent practices pose serious risks to consumers and adversely affect their trust and confidence in e-commerce platforms. Although India has enacted various laws such as the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 to regulate online transactions and protect consumer interests, instances of e-commerce fraud continue to increase.

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Information Technology Law in India, Gupta & Sharma(2023)** This book provides a detailed analysis of the Information Technology Act, 2000, focusing on cyber offences related to online transactions. The authors critically evaluate the effectiveness of penal provisions dealing with hacking, data theft, and online cheating. They point out that while the Act covers cybercrimes broadly, it lacks specific provisions exclusively addressing e-commerce frauds, creating enforcement challenges.<sup>1</sup>

**Judicial Approach to Cyber and E-Commerce Frauds, Rao(2018)** It focuses on the role of the judiciary in interpreting laws related to e-commerce frauds. The author analyses key victims of online fraud. The book concludes that although courts have adopted a progressive approach, limited case reporting restricts the development of strong legal precedents.<sup>1</sup>

**Ratanlal&Dhirajlal, Law of Crimes (2017)** This authoritative text discusses criminal liability under the Indian Penal Code and its application to cyber-enabled economic offences. The authors analyse offences such as cheating, criminal breach of trust, and forgery, which are frequently invoked in cases of online fraud. The work helps in

understanding how traditional criminal laws are extended to e-commerce frauds.<sup>2</sup>

**Nandan Kamath, Law Relating to Computers, Internet and E-Commerce (2019)** The book provides an in-depth doctrinal analysis of cyber laws in India with special reference to online transactions and intermediary liability. It discusses regulatory challenges faced by e-commerce platforms and evaluates the adequacy of existing legal provisions in addressing emerging forms of digital fraud.<sup>1</sup>

**World Bank Report on Consumer Protection in Digital Markets (2020)** This report analyses global trends in digital consumer protection and highlights regulatory gaps in addressing online fraud. It stresses the need for effective enforcement mechanisms and international cooperation to protect consumers engaged in cross-border e-commerce transactions.<sup>3</sup>

## IV. RESEARCH GAP

Despite the existence of multiple legal frameworks such as the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, there is a lack of comprehensive and specific legislation exclusively addressing e-commerce frauds, resulting in fragmented legal regulation. Most existing studies focus on doctrinal analysis of statutes, while limited empirical research examines the real-world effectiveness of these laws in preventing and addressing e-commerce frauds. There is insufficient research on enforcement challenges faced by regulatory authorities and law-enforcement agencies, particularly in cross-border e-commerce transactions involving jurisdictional conflicts. Additionally, minimal scholarly attention has been given to consumer awareness levels, reporting behaviour, and accessibility of redressal mechanisms. The impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital payment systems, and cryptocurrency-based transactions on the commission and regulation of e-commerce frauds also remains underexplored. Furthermore, comparative studies analysing international best practices and their adaptability to the Indian legal framework are limited, creating a gap in policy recommendations for strengthening consumer protection in the digital marketplace.

## V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the laws that deals with E-Commerce and Fraud.

<sup>1</sup>Ratanlal&Dhirajlal, Law of Crimes (2017)

<sup>3</sup>World Bank Report on Consumer Protection in Digital Markets (2020)

<sup>1</sup>Information Technology Law in India, Gupta & Sharma

2. To identify the common types of fraud faced by Consumers.
3. To examine the technology helps in preventing online fraud.
4. To understand the awareness among Consumers about online Safety & fraud prevention.
5. To identify various forms of fraud occurring in e-commerce transactions.
6. To suggest Simple and practical measures to make online shopping safer for consumers

## VI. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on both doctrinal and non doctrinal research . The source of data collected from different Newspaper ,Journal ,Magazine ,All India Reports and E-resources. This research is used some of the statistical tools such as Percentage method and Average method. The sample size of the respondents are 102.The Duration of the research is Three months.

## VII. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

study helps customers understand their legal rights and remedies against online fraud such as identity theft, payment fraud, fake sellers, and misleading advertisements. It highlights the role of consumer protection laws in ensuring transparency, fair trade practices, and accountability of e-commerce platforms. By analysing fraud patterns and legal safeguards, the research empowers consumers to make informed decisions while engaging in digital transactions. The study contributes to increasing digital trust, which is essential for the growth of online commerce in a technology-driven economy.

The research assists the government in evaluating the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks regulating e-commerce and cyber fraud. It identifies legislative gaps and enforcement challenges, helping policymakers frame stronger and adaptive laws. The study supports the government in strengthening cybercrime investigation mechanisms and improving coordination between regulatory and law-enforcement agencies. Insights from the research help promote a secure digital economy, protect national financial interests, and ensure compliance with international standards.

## VIII. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- H1: Reduction in fraud by E-Commerce platform may increase goodwill and consumer trust on their future decision.  
 H2: Making laws stringent that are relevant to E-Commerce platforms and frauds may boost digital platforms market.

## IX. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study is limited by the rapid evolution of e-commerce technologies and fraud techniques, which makes it difficult to capture the most recent developments; it is confined to a specific geographical and legal framework, thereby limiting its applicability to cross-border transactions; the research largely depends on secondary sources such as statutes, case laws, and reports, which may not fully reflect real-time experiences of victims; many instances of e-commerce fraud remain under-reported due to lack of awareness or fear of legal procedures; access to confidential data from e-commerce companies and enforcement agencies is restricted; judicial precedents in this area are still evolving; and time and resource constraints prevent extensive empirical analysis, resulting in a primary focus on the legal framework rather than technical or socio-economic dimensions of e-commerce fraud.

### Part-A (Doctrinal Research)

## X. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digitalization is the easy and convenient way for customer to purchase or to satisfy their needs. The Digital Platform has wide usefulness for consumers like available 24/7, wider market reach, cost effectiveness, variety and easy comparison. Nowadays, consumers trust sellers that they give their best product. But many sellers still engage in unfair and deceptive practices that harm consumer. E-commerce platforms have become widely popular due to their convenience and easy accessibility. However, the rapid growth of online transactions has also led to an increase in e-commerce fraud. Consumers often face issues such as non-delivery of goods, fake or defective products, payment fraud, and identity theft. Although laws exist to regulate e-commerce activities, many consumers are not aware of these legal protections.<sup>1</sup>

Due to lack of legal awareness and trust in grievance redressal mechanisms, many fraud cases remain unreported. Online fraud reduces consumer confidence and negatively affects trust in digital platforms. Taking effective preventive measures may help reduce fraud and improve consumer goodwill. At the same time, factors such as convenience, globalization, and digital transformation have contributed to the growth of e-commerce. Therefore, this study focuses on understanding e-commerce fraud, consumer awareness, legal protection, and the factors boosting digital platforms.The findings further indicate that consumer awareness regarding laws governing e-commerce is limited. While some respondents are aware that laws exist to regulate e-commerce

activities, many are not familiar with specific legal provisions such as the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. Due to lack of legal knowledge and trust in grievance redressal mechanisms, several victims do not formally report fraud incidents. This results in under-reporting of cases and weak enforcement of consumer protection laws.<sup>4</sup>

The study also shows mixed opinions regarding the adequacy of existing laws in preventing e-commerce fraud. Many respondents believe that current legal frameworks need stronger enforcement and clearer accountability of e-commerce platforms. The findings support the hypothesis that adopting effective security measures, such as secure payment systems and authentication methods, can reduce fraud and increase consumer goodwill and trust.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, the study confirms that factors such as convenience, digital transformation, globalization, and easy access to online platforms are major reasons for the rapid growth of e-commerce. Overall, the results indicate that although e-commerce has contributed positively to economic and consumer convenience, legal awareness, strict enforcement of laws, and improved technological safeguards are essential to control fraud and ensure a safe digital marketplace.<sup>5</sup>

It states that reduction in fraud by e-commerce platforms may increase goodwill and consumer trust in future decisions. The findings show that respondents who felt safer while using e-commerce platforms were more likely to trust the platform and continue using it. Consumers expressed higher confidence when platforms adopted secure payment systems, transparent return policies, and effective grievance redressal mechanisms. Reduction in fraudulent activities such as fake products, payment fraud, and non-delivery of goods positively influenced consumer satisfaction. This indicates that fraud prevention measures play a crucial role in building goodwill and long-term consumer trust.<sup>1</sup>

The study making laws stringent and relevant to e-commerce platforms and fraud may boost the digital platforms market. The results reveal that respondents believe stronger enforcement of e-commerce laws would increase accountability of platforms and reduce unfair trade practices. Awareness of consumer protection laws and strict penalties for fraud were seen as encouraging factors for increased

participation in digital commerce. Effective legal frameworks were found to enhance consumer confidence, thereby contributing to the growth of the e-commerce market. Thus, the findings confirm that strong laws and proper implementation are essential for the sustainable development of digital platforms.

Overall, the discussion shows that both technological safeguards and strict legal regulations are necessary to reduce fraud, increase consumer trust, and promote the healthy growth of e-commerce in India. The doctrinal analysis reveals that Indian e-commerce regulation largely adopts a reactive approach, addressing fraud only after disputes arise rather than preventing misconduct through proactive statutory controls.

The study finds that the absence of a dedicated e-commerce fraud legislation results in reliance on general cyber and consumer laws, which were not originally designed to address platform-based commercial frauds. It is observed that intermediary liability standards remain inconsistent, as courts assess platform responsibility on a case-by-case basis rather than through uniform statutory benchmarks.

The analysis highlights that overlapping jurisdiction between consumer forums, cyber crime cells, and civil courts often leads to procedural confusion and delays in dispute resolution. The research indicates that penalties prescribed under existing statutes are often inadequate to act as an effective deterrent against large-scale or organized e-commerce fraud.

It is evident that regulatory compliance requirements for e-commerce platforms are largely disclosure-based, with limited mechanisms to verify actual implementation. The study reveals that cross-border e-commerce fraud remains weakly regulated, as Indian laws face jurisdictional limitations in enforcing liability against foreign sellers and platforms.

The doctrinal examination shows that judicial reliance on due diligence standards has increased, but the lack of statutory clarity allows platforms to interpret compliance narrowly. The findings suggest that consumer protection in digital commerce is increasingly dependent on judicial activism rather than legislative reform. Overall, the results establish that legal fragmentation, enforcement gaps, and jurisdictional challenges significantly weaken the effectiveness of India's response to e-commerce fraud.

### Case Analysis:

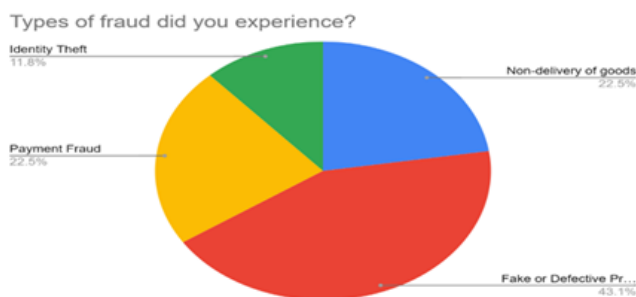
1. **Christian Louboutin SAS v. Nakul Bajaj 2018**-The Delhi High Court held that intermediary protection

<sup>4</sup>S. Srivastava & M. Singh, "Legal Framework for E-Commerce in India: Regulatory Challenges and Opportunities in Digital Economy," *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, Vol. 6, Issue 4 (2025)

<sup>5</sup>G. G. Parker, M.W. Van Alstyne & S. P. Choudary, *Platform Revolution* (W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2016).

under the Information Technology Act is not absolute. An e-commerce platform that actively participates in the sale of goods such as controlling listings, pricing, packaging, or delivery—cannot claim safe-harbour immunity and is liable for sale of counterfeit goods. Platforms must exercise due diligence to prevent fraud and protect consumer trust.

2. **Amazon Seller Services Pvt. Ltd. v. Amway India Enterprises Pvt. Ltd. 2019**-The Court emphasized that e-commerce platforms must ensure transparency, seller verification, and compliance with consumer protection norms. Allowing unauthorized sales without adequate safeguards amounts to unfair trade practices, and platforms are required to take corrective measures to protect consumers.
3. **Harshad J. Shah v. ICICI Bank Ltd. 2020**-The Consumer Forum held that banks and service providers are responsible for ensuring secure electronic transactions. In cases of unauthorized digital transactions caused by security failure, the bank is liable to compensate the consumer, reinforcing consumer protection in electronic commerce.



The table represents the gender-wise distribution of individuals regarding the type of fraud experienced while using e-commerce platforms, showing both numbers and percentages. The response for Fake or Defective Product fraud constitutes 43.14 percentage, followed by Non-delivery of goods and Payment fraud at 22.55 percentage each, while Identity theft makes up 11.76 percentage. The total number of individuals is 102, indicating a strong prevalence of product and transaction-related fraud in online shopping. Specifically, females who experienced fake or defective product fraud represent the largest subgroup, while males for the same category also constitute a significant proportion of respondents. The large percentage of 43.14 percentage represents that fake or defective product fraud is perceived as the most dominant form of e-commerce fraud among the respondents. This indicates a higher representation of concerns related to product quality, authenticity, and reliability of online sellers, with a comparatively smaller proportion of individuals experiencing identity theft. This confirms that fake or defective product fraud holds the highest percentage among all categories, accounting for 43.14 percentage, making it the most common type of e-commerce fraud experienced by the respondents.

**Part-B (Non-Doctrinal Research)**

**Table No.1:What type of fraud did you experience**

Particular	Male	Female	Transgender	Total
Non-delivery of Goods	13(12.75)	10(9.80)	0(0.00)	23(22.55)
Fake or Defective Product	19(18.63)	25(24.51)	0(0.00)	44(43.14)
Payment Fraud	7(6.86)	16(15.69)	0(0.00)	23(22.55)
Identity Theft	3(2.94)	9(8.82)	0(0.00)	12(11.76)
Total	42(41.17)	60(58.83)	0(0.00)	102(100.00)

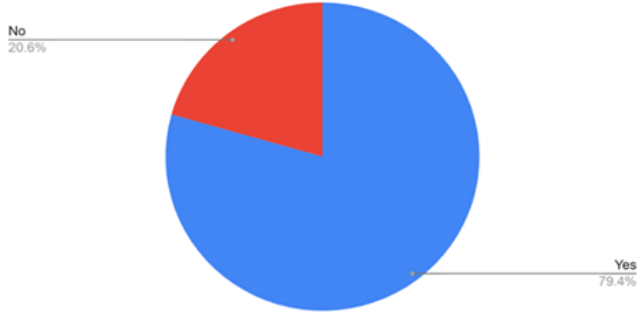
Source: Primary Data

**Table No.2: Taking measures to reduce fraud may increase goodwill**

Particular	Male	Female	Transgender	Total
Yes	36(35.29)	45(44.12)	0(0.00)	81(79.41)
No	6(5.88)	15(14.71)	0(0.00)	21(20.59)
Total	42(41.17)	60(58.83)	0(0.00)	102(100.00)

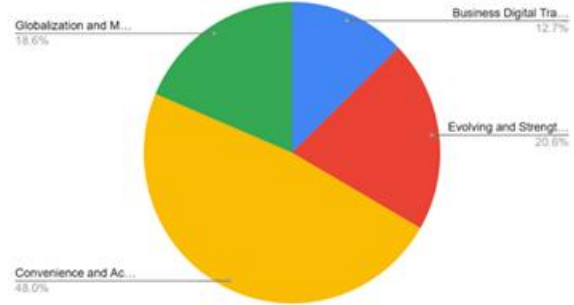
Source: Primary Data

Whether taking measures to reduce fraud may increase goodwill



The table represents the gender-wise distribution of individuals regarding whether taking measures to reduce fraud may increase goodwill, showing both numbers and percentages. The response for Yes constitutes 79.41 percentage of the respondent, while the response for No constitutes 20.59 percentage of the respondent. The large percentage represents that the majority of the individuals believe that taking measures to reduce fraud may increase goodwill in e-commerce platforms. This indicates a higher representation of individuals who are confident that effective fraud prevention measures help in building trust, credibility, and goodwill among consumers, with a significantly smaller proportion of individuals holding the view that such measures do not contribute to goodwill.

Major reasons for the growth of e-commerce Platforms



The table represents the gender-wise distribution of individuals regarding the major reasons for the growth of e-commerce platforms, showing both numbers and percentages. The responses for Convenience and Accessibility constitute 48.04 percentage, followed by Evolving and Strengthening Law at 20.58 percentage, while Globalization and Market Expansion makes up 18.62 percentage. Business Digital Transformation accounts for 12.74 percentage of the total responses. The total number of individuals is 102, with a fairly distributed range of perceptions regarding the factors contributing to the growth of e-commerce platforms. Specifically, females who believe Convenience and Accessibility drives the growth of e-commerce represent the largest subgroup at 30.39 percentage, while males perceive Convenience and Accessibility as a major factor at 17.65 percentage. The large percentage of 48.04 percentage represents that Convenience and Accessibility is considered the most significant reason for the growth of e-commerce platforms. This indicates a higher representation of the belief that ease of use, accessibility, and time-saving benefits fuel the expansion of online platforms, with Evolving and Strengthening Law still accounting for a notable 20.58 percentage. This confirms that Convenience and Accessibility holds the highest percentage among all identified reasons for the growth of e-commerce platforms.

**Table No.3:Major reasons for the growth of e-commerce platforms**

Particular	Male	Female	Transgender	Total
Business Digital Transformation	6(5.88)	7(6.86)	0(0.00)	13(12.74)
Convenience & Accessibility	18(17.65)	31(30.39)	0(0.00)	49(48.04)
Evolving & Strengthening Law	11(10.78)	10(9.80)	0(0.00)	21(20.58)
Globalization & Market Expansion	7(6.86)	12(11.76)	0(0.00)	19(18.62)
Total	42(41.17)	60(58.83)	0(0.00)	102(100.00)

Source: Primary Data

**XI. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS**

**Hypothesis No.1: Reduction in fraud by E-Commerce platform may increase goodwill and consumer trust on their future decision.**

Table No.2 shows that 79.41 percentage of the respondents agreed that taking measures to reduce fraud may increase goodwill. This indicates that a majority of the respondents perceive fraud prevention measures as an effective means to enhance trust and goodwill in e-commerce platforms. Hence, this hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis No.2: Making laws stringent that are relevant to E-Commerce platforms and frauds may boost digital platforms market.**

Table No.3 shows that 48.04 percentage of the respondents agreed that Convenience and Accessibility is the major reason for the growth of e-commerce platforms. Hence, this hypothesis is accepted.

## XII. CONCLUSION

This study examined the laws governing e-commerce and the problem of online fraud faced by consumers. The findings show that e-commerce platforms have made shopping easier and more accessible, but they have also increased the risk of fraud such as fake products, non-delivery of goods, and payment-related issues. Many consumers have experienced these problems while using online platforms, which affects their trust and confidence. The study also found that most respondents believe that taking proper measures to prevent fraud can increase goodwill and trust in e-commerce platforms. Convenience and accessibility were identified as the main reasons for the growth of e-commerce, showing that consumers value ease of use and time-saving benefits. However, awareness about existing laws and consumer rights remains limited among users. Although laws like the Information Technology Act and the Consumer Protection Act exist, stronger enforcement and better awareness are needed to control online fraud effectively.

## XIII. SUGGESTION

1. **Improving Consumer Awareness :** Many online frauds occur due to lack of awareness among consumers. Educating people about phishing, fake websites, and payment scams can help prevent such frauds.
2. **Use of Secure Technology :** E-commerce platforms should use secure payment systems and two-factor authentication. These measures help protect users from unauthorized access and fraud.
3. **Strict Enforcement of Cyber Laws :** Cyber laws should be enforced strictly to control online fraud. Quick action against offenders can reduce cybercrime and build consumer trust.
4. **Effective Grievance Redressal System:** Simple and accessible complaint mechanisms should be provided by e-commerce platforms. This complaints helps reduce consumer losses.
5. **Strengthening Regulatory Oversight:** Regulatory authorities should continuously monitor e-commerce platforms for compliance with legal standards. Periodic

inspections and mandatory disclosures can help ensure accountability and prevent unfair trade practices.

6. **Seller Verification and Monitoring:** Strict seller verification procedures and continuous monitoring of seller activities should be implemented. This can help prevent the sale of counterfeit or defective products and protect consumer interests.
7. **Clear Platform Liability Guidelines:** Specific statutory guidelines should be framed to clearly define the extent of liability of e-commerce platforms in cases of fraud, counterfeit goods, and misleading practices to avoid ambiguity in enforcement.
8. **Mandatory Disclosure of Seller Information:** E-commerce platforms should be required to disclose verified seller details such as business address, registration number, and contact information to enhance transparency and consumer trust.
9. **Faster Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:** Special fast-track consumer dispute resolution mechanisms for e-commerce-related complaints should be established to ensure timely justice and reduce consumer hardship.
10. **Regular Compliance Audits:** Mandatory legal and technical audits of e-commerce platforms should be conducted periodically to assess compliance with consumer protection and cyber security standards.

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