

Centre suggests 'country of origin' filter on e-comm sites

Will Make It Easier To Access Info

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New Delhi/ Mumbai: Consumer affairs department on Friday suggested e-commerce companies explore including a new filter feature of "country of origin" on their websites and mobile apps for products, which will help consumers make quick choices. E-commerce platforms would have to create a new filter having a drop down menu of countries, allowing consumers to make their choice as per their preference.

At present, companies display the country of origin of items under the product description option and to check this, buyers need to go through the entire information of each product, which is more time taking. "Many of these-commerce platforms have filters on their sites and apps such as price range, brand, type of product and different sizes. So, adding another filter on country of origin is very much feasible



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and that will help consumers to find items of their choice based on their country of origin quickly. This will bring customer satisfaction," said an official.

The department held a video conference with industry players and other stakeholders on Friday for amending the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules for country of origin-based filters on their platforms. "There was almost a consensus among the participants, including from major e-commerce firms, and they said this would need change in the algorithm to create this new filter feature. We will

hold more deliberations with the stakeholders," said an official. Sources said earlier the e-commerce firms smoothly complied with the Legal Metrology Rules for labeling packaged commodities.

Industry sources said the meeting was more of an exploratory one where the idea was to understand the feasibility of getting the added filter within apps and platforms. They added that officials wanted to understand the constraints of companies if they were to create such a feature. "For marketplaces like Amazon, Flipkart and Myntra, it would be more of a tech related issue, which can

be solved. But for companies which hold inventory, there may be an added compliance burden," one of them said.

Another e-commerce executive, however, said that given the limited space on mobile phones, adding another filter could be a constraint. "It could be quite draining for the industry. And the expectation of the ministry is to get it done before the festive season if it gets implemented," he said.

Satish Meena, adviser at market research firm Datum Intelligence, said if this is implemented, customers will be able to filter out products based on their country of origin which means that some brands on these platforms could lose visibility. "Until now, not many consumers paid so much attention to a product's country of origin. But overall, it shouldn't be a very big challenge for platforms," he added. For quick commerce platforms, food and grocery accounts for a major part of their coverage as of now and most of them are sourced from India anyway. A very small part of their inventory comes from out of India currently, added Meena.