

India launched its Right to Repair Portal

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Introduction

The concept of **Right to Repair** has emerged as a key pillar of consumer rights in the modern digital and electronic age. It empowers consumers and third-party service providers to repair and maintain products without being dependent on the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). As electronic waste continues to rise globally and sustainable consumption becomes more important, the right to repair is being recognised as a means to promote environmental responsibility, product durability, and consumer autonomy.

In India, this principle is gaining formal recognition with recent efforts by the **Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA)** to establish a structured **Repairability Index (RI)** for electronic goods and to expand access through the **Right to Repair Portal**.

Why in News

Recently, the Department of Consumer Affairs received a comprehensive report outlining a **Framework for Repairability Index (RI)** in the **mobile and electronics sector**. This initiative aims to support the growing movement for the Right to Repair by introducing a measurable way to assess how easily a product can be repaired.

What is the Right to Repair?

The **Right to Repair** refers to the **legal and practical ability** of consumers to repair the products they own, or to get them repaired from a service provider of their choice. It challenges monopolistic practices by manufacturers who often restrict access to repair manuals, tools, spare parts, or software needed for servicing a product.

Origin of the Right to Repair

The concept originated in the **United States**, where the **Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair**

Act (2012) mandated car manufacturers to provide access to repair information and diagnostic tools to independent repair shops and car owners. Since then, the movement has expanded to cover electronic goods, farm equipment, medical devices, and more.

Significance of the Right to Repair

1. Consumer Empowerment

It democratizes access to repair tools, manuals, and parts, allowing users to maintain or fix their devices without depending on the original manufacturer.

2. Reduction in E-Waste

By making it easier to repair electronic products, the initiative helps extend the lifecycle of devices and reduces the burden of electronic waste on the environment.

3. Promotion of Circular Economy

Repair and reuse of parts support the recycling ecosystem and reduce the need for mining and manufacturing new components, which are resource- and energy-intensive.

4. Accountability and Product Quality

Manufacturers are encouraged to build more durable and repair-friendly products, knowing that consumers will have the means to assess and maintain them.

5. Cost Saving for Consumers

Access to affordable repair options can reduce maintenance costs and increase the value derived from purchased goods.

Repairability Index (RI)

To institutionalize the Right to Repair in India, the **Department of Consumer Affairs** has developed a **Repairability Index** to assess and categorize the repairability of electronic products.

Key components of the **Repairability Index** include:

- **Availability of Spare Parts**

Whether spare parts are readily available for the product in the open market.

- **Cost of Repair**

The average cost of common repairs in comparison to the overall cost of the product.

- **Software Updates**

Availability and frequency of software updates, which influence device longevity.

- **Availability of Repair Information**

Accessibility of manuals, guides, and videos to aid consumers or third-party technicians in repairing the device.

The index will help consumers make informed choices while purchasing devices and encourage companies to manufacture products that are easier to repair.

Right to Repair Portal - India

India launched its **Right to Repair Portal** in 2024 under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.

The portal offers:

- **Product Manuals and Repair Videos**

Open access to guides and step-by-step videos for repairing consumer goods.

- **Spare Parts and Warranty Details**

Information about the price of spare parts, warranty period, and extended warranty coverage.

- **Service Center Locator**

Details of authorized and recognized service centers across the country.

- **Recognition of Third-Party Repairers**

A framework to accredit and recognize independent service providers.

- **Country of Origin Information**

Product-specific information about manufacturing origin, aligning with consumer awareness and national manufacturing priorities.

Conclusion

The **Right to Repair** is a progressive step towards creating a **sustainable and consumer-friendly economy**. As India formalizes the **Repairability Index** and strengthens infrastructure through the **Right to Repair Portal**, it not only empowers consumers but also aligns with broader goals of environmental sustainability, circular economy, and digital literacy. However, the success of this movement will depend on the cooperation of manufacturers, regulators, and civil society to ensure transparency, accessibility, and enforcement.