LEGAL RELIEF AGAINST ONLINE SHOPPING IRREGULARITIES: BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To,

Junayed Mohammed Hashib

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Subject: Submission of the Thesis Paper.

Dear Sir,

It is a great pleasure to submit my thesis Legal Relief against Online Shopping

Irregularities: Bangladesh Perspective . I have given best efforts to finish the

thesis with relevant information that I have collected from various sources. I have

concentrated my efforts to achieve the objectives of the work and hope that my

endeavor will serve the purpose. I shall be grateful and obliged if you kindly

accept my thesis and evaluate it.

Sincerely yours

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CERTIFICATION

This is certifying that the thesis on Legal Relief against Online Shopping Irregularities: Bangladesh Perspective is done by KM.Monir Hossain in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of LL.B (Honors) from Stamford University Bangladesh. The thesis has been carried out under my guidance and is a record of the bonafide work carried out successfully.

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ABSTRACT

The growing trend of online shopping has overtaking the popularity of traditional shopping system among its consumers in recent decades. In the world of digitalization, it s has eased the difficulties of relating and paved a modern approach to expand business. People are now able to conduct their business or trade activities in the blink of an eye through the blessing of online shopping. Even in Bangladesh online shopping is now an ever growing phenomenon in our day to day life. Every business sector and company is trying their best to comply with the new idea of E-shopping to make more profitable income. But sometimes buyers as well sellers fall a victim to some unwanted situation. They get unnecessarily harassed by using this modern way of shopping. Being a new concept of trading system, no specific legal protection is available for aggrieved party. Rather the existing traditional legal procedures are applied to mitigate problems relating to online shopping system of Bangladesh. This study has a comprehensive perspective and provides a bird s eye view of the legal remedies of online shopping irregularities and available remedies in Bangladesh. The study also provides an afford to understand what rights are available for customers in case of online shopping irregularities in Bangladesh.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Since the dawn of civilization man are doing business, obviously not by money in all the time but people used Barter System' for a long time. Days have changed; mankind has experienced a lot of changes in the civilization. Mighty Rome has fallen, Greece is now bankrupt, world has suffered two World-Wars' but the basic system of business has not changed. Now-a-day s world is going too fast. People have money but sometimes they don t have the time for shopping physically. A business always looks in the hole or scope in the market. So entrepreneurs took the chance and come out with the idea of online shopping.

Online shopping or e-shopping is such kind of electronic commerce which allows consumers to buy goods or services directly from a seller over the internet by using a web browser. Consumers can easily find their choices of product by visiting the website of the retailer or by searching among alternative vendors through shopping search engine which displays the same product s availability and pricing at different e-retailers. In recent times, online marketing has secured its place as the preferred marketing method.

In Bangladesh the concept of online shopping has added a new dimension to our day to day life. It is indeed a new idea and since the e-commerce protocol issued by the Bangladesh government. It has become much easier and popular. It

¹. What is Online Shopping, Computer Hope, accessed July 10, 2020, https://www.computerhope.com/jargon/o/online-shopping.htm

is reported that every year in the country about 1.5 to 2 million people are using online shopping method and every year online sales and purchase is increasing by 15% to 20%.² There is a number of free classified websites and online shopping marketplaces in Bangladesh like Ekhanei.com, Bikroy.com, Kaymu, Rokomari.com, Othoba.com etc. The IT (information and technology) ecosystem has improved a lot in our country over the last several years. It has launched 4G services, eased payment systems and introduced mobile banking. These will enhance more growth of e-trading.

The present research proposal is all about the legal remedies available in respect of online shopping irregularities in Bangladesh. A brief statement of procedure to conduct such research is given below. The study will be a fruitful one for understanding the position of relevant laws in order to get proper remedy in this regard.

1.2 History of online shopping

Electronic shopping was invented by an English inventor called Michael Aldrich. In 1979, he invented the earliest form of e-commerce which allowed online transaction processing between business and customers, as well as between business and business.³

The invention of the first ever web browser, i.e. the World Wide Web in 1990, is the second major proponent of online shopping. Without an interconnected internet, there would be no online marketplace at all. We owe this marvelous invention called the WWW to Tim Berners Lee. That man is the major reason why millions of people have accessed to the internet which hosts numerous e-commerce platforms.

https://future startup.com/2019/09/22/online-shopping-among-the-bangladeshi-smartphone-users-lowest-in-asia-pacific/

². Muhammad Jubayer, Online Shopping Among The Bangladeshi Smartphone Users Lowest In Asia Pacific, Future Startup, accessed August 27, 2020,

³ Donszen, A Brief History of Online Shopping , odmworld , accessed October 13, 2020, https://www.odmworld.com/blog/brief-history-of-online-shopping/

After the establishment of these two very important inventions, the expansion of online shopping was only imminent. In 1994, Netscape developed an encryption-based internet security protocol called SSL or Secure Sockets Layer.

Any e-commerce owner knows how important an SSL certificate is for business. An SSL makes it difficult or impossible for the exchange of information on the internet to be intercepted. When buying something in online, you are required to send sensitive details directly to the online shop. This means that you re sending private information like credit card details to servers. SSL ensures your data isn t stored by any crooked servers on transmission.

In the question of security, SSL is always required for all financial transactions in online. In 1995 welcomed the biggest transformation of online shopping. The first online marketplaces were established. First came Amazon.com, arguably the biggest online marketplace launched by Jeff Bezos-yup, one of the richest men in the world as of 2019 with an estimated net worth of \$280.5 billion⁴.

Previously all these online marketplaces had no reliable payment gateway. It is 1998, PayPal gets a full swing at the online payment system niche; quickly becomes a success. Once a dream, online shopping was then taking its shape.

Jack Ma, launched a very prominent Chinese marketplace in 1999 called Alibaba.com. At the turn of the 21st century in 2000, Google launched Adwords, an advertising service that allows sellers to place adverts in Google search results related to viewers search preference. In other words, Google connected sellers to buyers on a greater scale.

Another idea changed the world of online shopping forever. In 2004, Shopify, a prominent online storefront service made it possible for low-capital sellers to set up online stores. Shopify is to online stores as WordPress is to websites. In 2006, PayPal launched a new way for people to exchange money and buy things that they want on online directly from their cell phones. As of 2020, it s clear that the entire internet is now a virtual shopping mall. As people are

Jeff Bezos , Forbes, accessed July 21, 2020, https://www.forbes.com/profile/jeff-bezos/?sh=1793ce011b23

choosing to carry out trades on Instagram, Whatsapp and Facebook, it s safe to say that we are in the era of online shopping.

1.3 Meaning of online Shopping

Online shopping is the process of researching and purchasing products or services over the Internet. The earliest online stores went into business in 1992, and online retailing took over a significant segment of the retail market during the first decade of the twenty-first century, as ownership of personal computers increased and established retailers began to offer their products over the Internet.

Online shopping involves purchasing products or services over the Internet. Online shopping is done through an online shop, e-shop, e-store, virtual store, web shop, internet shop or online store. All the products in online stores are described through text, with photos and with multimedia files. Many online stores will provide links for extra information about their products. They often make available safety procedures, instructions, manufacture specification and demonstrations. Some will provide advice or how-to guides. As you are already on the internet, you can search for product reviews that other consumers may have posted. Some online stores have place for these reviews on their own sites. Many allow users to rate their products. Such advice from other consumers about a product would be unavailable in a conventional store.

1.4 Literature Review on Online Shopping

In the past decade, there has been a dramatic change in the way of consumer s behavior pattern that they have altered their way of shopping. Although consumers continue to purchase from a physical store, consumers feel very convenient to shop online since it frees the customer from personally visiting the store. Online shopping has lots of advantages like it saves time, energy of the consumer while buying.

Online shopping is one of the most widely used words in the business world. In Bangladesh during last five years online shopping has grown very fast. Significant amount of research work has been done in respect of online shopping

system. Many researchers have pointed out the possibilities of online shopping. At the same time many others pointed out the draw backs and provided necessary suggestion to make it more useful for the online consumers. But it is difficult to find out any documents that clearly highlights legal remedies in online shopping practices in Bangladesh. For having a clear idea it could be helpful to go through different studies of foreign and domestic articles, research papers, and newspaper writings. Online retailing is a more convenient shopping channel for customers because online stores offer greater time savings. This is one of the most prime reasons that people want to prefer online shopping.⁵

Ishita Sharmin, marketing manager of Bikroy.com, said that initially 15 to 20 thousand persons would log onto the site per month to buy items. Now every month about 2 million interested shoppers visit the site. Every day on average 10 thousand advertisements appear on Bikroy.com.⁶ In an article titled as Discover the 4p s of Internet Marketing Mix Lee (2009) states, 'Internet changes the way of selling products and services in comparison to traditional marketing mix. Consumers now use the internet to research and purchase products and services in online.'⁷

Wilson (2002) said that, a business can t rely on just one marketing approach, but must develop a whole spectrum of marketing strategies, operating simultaneously, in order to survive and flourish in a competitive world.⁸

According to him online shopping provides a new force of attracting more quantity of sales, increasing business revenue, enhancing business profitability, improving business sustainability in the competitive global market.

⁵ Reasons why your customers prefer to buy online , CommerceUp, accessed July 12, 2020, https://medium.com/@CommerceUp.io/reasons-why-your-customers-prefer-to-buy-online-6a5b122cdede

⁶ Jahangir Shah, Online shopping increases, Prothomalo, accessed July 19, 2020, https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/Online-shopping-increases

⁷ Fatah-ul-islam, E-shopping in Bangladesh, Slide share, accessed July 19, 2020 http://slideshare.net/limonfnb/e-shopping-in-bangladesh

⁸ Wilson, T.D. (2002), "The nonsense of 'knowledge management', Information Research, 8(1), paper no. 144, accessed July 22, 2020, http://InformationR.net/ir/8-1/paper144.html

Chapter 2

EMERGENCE OF ONLINE SHOPPING SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH

2.1 Beginning of Online Shopping in Bangladesh

Our country saw a limited version of e-com in late 90's with the idea to serve NRBs who were looking for options to send gifts to their beloved ones in Dhaka. Slowly and steadily ecommerce started to grow from 2000 and in between 2008. But the major issues were unclear payment gateway, uncertain delivery system and lacking of knowledge. Situation started to change when the first payment aggregator SSL COMMERZ-launched their business in 2010. And with the inclusion of WiMAX, internet speed got a bump as well during the same time which gave a boost to the online business too. Beside this improvement, we saw some major investments during this period, companies like ajkerdeal, rokomari, akhoni [now bagdoom] etc. started their operation as well. Classified sector along with e-com got some serious attention from the foreign investors beside the local movement. For example: olx, bikroy, daraz, kaymu etc. In 2016, Bangladesh has seen the first ever and now the biggest pure e-commerce platform GHOORI. With a vision to connect all Shops [more than 7K Shops are active in the market right now]. Ghoori started their operation and now they have more than 3000 small merchants under a single integrated platform. The concept of online marketplace was introduced in 2012/13 by akhoni and ajkerdeal. From 2015 onwards Kaymu and Daraz is disrupting the market by huge investment in marketing for quick sales,

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⁹ Rashed Moslem, A Brief History of E Commerce in Bangladesh, Medium, accessed September 10, 2020, https://medium.com/@r moslem/a-brief-history-of-e-commerce-in-bangladesh-

which eventually is proven a wrong step and ultimately kaymu merged with Daraz in 2017.¹⁰

Rokomari.com is another big inclusion in e- commerce market back in 2013. They have successfully implemented a proven business model [amazon] and sold books worth of 1 crore taka in their first year of operation.¹¹ Now rokomari is one of the top names in the industry and started expanding their business in other categories.

Meanwhile bikroy.com has shown a true position and distinguished themselves from other front runners by becoming the largest marketplace for buying and selling any consumer item. Unfortunately, due to huge investment pressure and lack of vision our own home grown classified site CLICKBD lost the momentum and loses the race eventually.

There has been tremendous development in delivery industry during this period. Many companies opened just to serve e-com merchants. Food delivery services like HUNGRYNAKI started their operation in 2013 and doing amazing at present.

Last but not the least; we have sheba.xyz, which is shaping the service industry by using online channels. Nonetheless, Chaldal.com redefined grocery shopping for us. They are the only company who has Silicon Valley s investment and we hope they will change the shopping experience as a whole for our country within a short span of time. Big FMCG(Fast-Moving consumer Goods) like Pran Gruop started their e-commerce journey in 2016. Not only that, Edison group started Pickaboo (online service) and they are now one of the the top four e-com sites in Bangladesh. Besides brands like BTI, Transcom, ACI [Swapno], Epyllion, Meenabazar etc. are going to launch their online sales center.

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¹⁰ "Benefits of online shopping in Bangladesh, Online Shopping BD, accessed September 24, 2020, https://onlineshoppingbd.org/online-shopping-benefits-bangladesh

Rokomari.com-Overview, Owler, accessed September 24, 2020 https://www.owler.com/company/rokomari

 $^{^{\}rm 12}$ Fahmiza Ramina Hossain, Top e-Commerce Sites in Bangladesh According To Alexa, brainstation-23, published May 3, 2020,

https://brainstation-23.com/top-e-commerce-sites-bangladesh-according-alexa/

2.2 Recent Demand of online Shopping in Bangladesh

The corona virus outbreak has given a boost to the e-ecommerce business in the country with the total size of e-commerce surging to Tk 16,616 crore in eight months of the year 2020 and the market size was Tk 13,184 crore in 2019.¹³ E-commerce businesses said that the COVID-19 outbreak had changed habits and lifestyles of consumers, creating new opportunities for the local e-commerce market. They said that a segment of consumers who had never thought of using online services for their daily needs are now enjoying such services on the platforms.¹⁴

Vice-president of E-commerce Association of Bangladesh , Shahab Uddin told, Due to the corona virus outbreak, consumers awareness and understanding of the benefits of online shopping have built up that we couldn t do in the last five years. ¹⁵

E-commerce or electronic commerce, means buying and selling products through internet and is commonly associated with online shopping. The government of Bangladesh enforced shutdown from March 25 to May 30 to check the spread of COVID-19 in the country that caused widespread store closures and stay-at-home orders.

Daraz chief marketing officer Abrar Hasnain said, Everyday new customers are showing their interest to shop online and getting to know the e-commerce platform more than before. So, overall we are observing a holistic approach towards. He also said that, "during the shutdown low-value items and daily household items were mostly in demand, after the shutdown it was a mixed

¹⁴ E-commerce: a bright spot amid the gloom, The Daily Star online, published September 09, 2020,

¹³ Saddam Hossain, E-commerce sector feels coronavirus pinch, The IndependentBD, published April 4, 2020

http://m.theindependentbd.com//post/243578

https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/e-commerce-bright-spot-amid-the-gloom-1958261?amp

¹⁵ Mostafizur Rahman, E-commerce shines as people opt for online shopping, The Newagebd, published September 13, 2020,

https://www.newagebd.net/article/116175/e-commerce-shines-as-people-opt-for-online-shopping

situation they were observing from the customers. Most of the customers looked for grocery and fast moving consumers goods to meet daily necessity."¹⁶

There was also demand for digital goods like subscriptions, games and gift cards and home appliances like washing machine, microwave and baking stuff. But Chaldal chief executive officer Waseem Alim thinks that, though the online business witnessed a huge jump in the country, it is still very minimal.¹⁷

Bangladesh has a huge market-opportunity, but sometimes entrepreneurs are able to manage a very minimal number of orders compared to their capacity. People have lack of willingness to give additional efforts for buying products through online as they still are not comfortable with the platform. Corona Virus infection fear and mandatory restriction on movement have created new online customers, but not all of them would continue shopping online.

Meena Bazar and Meena-Click' chief executive officer Shaheen Khan said that, many e-commerce businesses undoubtedly grew heavily during the pandemic period, but now the situation of economic activities in the country is becoming normal.

In this mean time E-retailers faced a number of challenges including giving deliveries on time due to restrictions in movement and shortage of delivery persons. Retailers were suddenly flooded with orders and they were not prepared for the sudden hike in orders.

Government should strengthen monitoring system over the online shopping sector as many e-retailers are running their business by only opening a page on Facebook without having enough logistic infrastructures. There must be a clear policy for the sector. Many online shops took months for delivering a product to customers, which damaged the confidence of customers.

Businesses had faced hurdles to delivering products outside Dhaka but the delivery situation is now becoming normal and orders from outside Dhaka had

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¹⁶ Sajidul Haque, Pandemic forced customers to shop online. Now, complaints are piling up, bdnews24, published July 30, 2020,

https://bdnews 24.com/business/2020/07/30/pandemic-forced-customers-to-shop-online.-now-complaints-are-piling-up

¹⁷ Mostafizur Rahman, E-commerce shines as people opt for online shopping,

been increasing gradually due to growing awareness among the consumers. According to the ECAB, the market size of e-commerce was Tk 560 crore in 2016 that jumped to Tk 8,632 in 2017.

Around 2,000 companies across the country are involved with e-commerce through web sites. Besides, over 50,000 entrepreneurs are doing business online through their Facebook pages.¹⁸

2.3 Some online shopping sites in Bangladesh

2.3.1 Chaldal.com

Chaldal.com is now one of the leading e-commerce shops that famous for delivering groceries. The site has been facing a considerable increase in sales as people are turning into the Chaldal s site to order their groceries as people are restricted to go out to get groceries by themselves due to the pandemic.

2.3.2 Daraz.com

Daraz is one of the most popular and oldest e-commerce sites in Bangladesh, specializing in electronics, home appliances, clothing etc. Recently they have added a grocery section in their sub-category which makes Daraz one of the top e-commerce sites of Bangladesh. Also their home appliance section is booming as people need to do most of the house chores by themselves and Daraz offers the biggest home appliance section through their website.

2.3.3 Meena Click

Meena Bazaar is one of the biggest departmental store brands in Bangladesh. With the Meenaclick, Meena has entered the e-commerce industry and is catering essentials and groceries to the people who are unable to go to a store physically due to the pandemic or any other causes.

¹⁸ Mostafizur Rahman, E-commerce shines as people opt for online shopping,

2.3.4 Othoba.com

Othoba is one of the e-commerce sites which are seeing a booming increase in usage due to its Ramadan centric offers and supply of PPEs and other hygiene products or necessary products during the COVID-19 crisis.

2.3.5 Priyoshop.com

PriyoShop has already known as one of the top e-commerce sites for fashion, jewelry, and clothing in Bangladesh. But during the lock-down due to the pandemic, PriyoShop has been majorly focusing on providing daily groceries, home appliance products, PPEs and other hygienic products; thus seeing an increased growth during these times.

2.3.6 Shawapno.com

Shwapno is also one of the leading departmental stores in Bangladesh. As people are forced to be restricted in movement, Shwapno has launched their own ecommerce site where people can get their groceries and essentials with free home delivery.

2.3.7 Khaasfood.com

Khaasfood has come to focus during this COVID-19 situation for providing groceries. Khaasfood has taken initiatives to promote their online grocery shopping, Ramadan offers, and nutrition to keep people healthy during the pandemic; hence seeing increased user traffic in recent times.

2.3.8 Sheba.xyz

Sheba.xyz is an online marketplace where people of Bangladesh can look for services such as cleaning, repairs, and delivery. As the lockdown in the country had made people unable to go out for essentials, Sheba has introduced grocery

shopping, healthcare, and emergency services to meet the ongoing demands throughout the quarantine.

2.3.9 Ajkerdeal.com

Ajkerdeal is a popular e-commerce platform in Bangladesh selling a wide variety of products. And as the pandemic has caused a severe lockdown in the country, Ajkerdeal has adopted to selling PPEs, healthcare products, groceries, and other essentials to help out the people during these tough times.

2.3.10 Pharmacy.com

Medicine and other healthcare products are essential to many people. And due to the quarantine and lock-down, many people are not able to procure their medicines and this leaving them to further health risks. Pharmacy.com is the leading online pharmacy store who has been seeing a substantial rise in sales as they are one of the few e-commerce businesses that have brought the pharmacy to a digital storefront.

Chapter 3

ONLINE SHOPPING IRREGULARITIES: BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Online Shopping Problems

Online shopping is glorious invention which allows people to buy things from the comfort of their homes. No more travelling to multiple stores to find the right product; no more having to deal with over-enthusiastic sales persons; no more standing in long lines at the checkout counter. The e-commerce boom has certainly changed the way we shop for the better. But, like everything else, the world of online shopping is not all roses. Despite all the efforts of e-commerce companies to alleviate them, there are a few problems that customers still have to face while shopping in online. Some of these problems are discussed below.

3.1.1 Quality issues

The biggest problem while buying things online is that you have no guarantee of a product's quality. Reviews are not always reliable and all the research can't assure you of a product's quality; fraudulent sellers, who intentionally mislead customers to increase sales, are the prime reason for faulty products being sold in online. With the volume of goods which e-commerce companies handle these days, it can be quite difficult for them to conduct quality checks on each and every one of the products they're selling. Additionally, the issue of getting the correct size remains a serious drawback for buying clothing and footwear in online. Sizes vary from brand to brand, and since you can't try out the products before buying them, selecting the size is always a gamble. Delivery is a logistics predicament that constantly turns up while shopping in online; it is a concern to the customer that when the order will be delivered. While all e-commerce sites have order tracking systems for their customers, they aren t always accurate. Delivery personnel often

turn up at our homes when we're at work or out somewhere as there's no way to fix a particular time slot for the delivery to take place. This same issue exists while returning products. Another problem is that the majority of the population lives in rural areas and they are unable to shop online because not all e-commerce sites provide delivery services to their locations.

3.1.2 Digital payment failures

Whether a customer is paying by credit/debit card, internet-banking or one of the several digital wallets that exist today, the failure of digital payments always looms overhead while making online transactions. A faltering internet connection or a technical glitch often results in the payable amount being debited from a customer's account without being credited to the selling party. And retrieving this amount is anything but a quick process; one has to inform the site and then wait around 7-10 days before the amount is refunded to their bank accounts. But this situation is steadily improving as the sector is focusing more on cashless transactions and customers are getting more informed about making payments online.

3.1.3 Lack of security

The lack of cyber security is a major problem on the internet today. E-commerce sites record important customer s data like name, phone number, address, and bank details. If these sites don't implement stringent cyber security measures, your data is at risk of falling into the wrong hands that can do havoc wreak on your bank account.

3.1.4 Unclear Return and Guarantee Policy

Since buyer have no idea of product s quality until they hold it in their hands, returning things bought in online is quite common. Unless customer buying from one of the established online shopping sites, it s important to go through the return policy while making a purchase. But most sites have vague return policies that can leave buyer with a low-quality product and no way to return it. The same

applies for guarantees, as most sites don't clearly mention what the policy is for a product s guarantee and then refuse to carry out replacements if you receive a damaged product.

Chapter 4

LEGAL PROVISION FOR ONLINE SHOPPING IRREGULARITIES

4.1 Applicable Laws for online shopping system

Though the concept of online shopping is getting spread day by day all over the country but sometimes people have to face problems in this regard. Both buyer and seller suffer from unwanted situations. General people have not become that much expertise in this field. Service of faulty products, false or misleading advertisements, unsatisfactory service, over claiming price, unavailability of product, refusing in refund conditions etc situations often arise in the field of online shopping system. Often customers got themselves trapped by fake advertisements of product and they become victim of cheating. Being aggrieved, the party can t even understand where to seek remedy and how to get remedy as online marketing procedure is a new concept in our country so far, until now no relevant separate law regarding this aspect has been established. Existing backdated and indirect laws are used to solve the problems. In general sense, aggrieved party got damages. Laws relating to Penal code, 1860; The Contract Act, 1872; The Sales of Goods Act, 1930; The Special Powers Act, 1974; The Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution Ordinance, 1985; The ICT Act, 006; The Consumers Right Protection Act, 2009; The Trade Mark Act, 2009 etc are used to give remedy to the aggrieved party.

The present research proposal is all about the legal remedies available in respect of online shopping irregularities in Bangladesh. A brief statement of procedure to conduct such research is given below. The study will be fruitful one

for understanding the position of relevant laws in order to get proper remedy in this regard.

4.1.1 The Contract Act, 1872

Online shopping system involves contract between buyer and seller. The traditional terms and conditions of a contract are applied to these online contracts but with extra complications. To elaborate, the parties involvement may have never met and may sometimes not even realize that they are contracting and they may reside in different countries as well. When a buyer clicks on an I Agree or Purchase button on a website they are effectively agreeing to a contract. Breach of a Contract occurs when one party fails to perform his or her obligations under the contract or intimates that they will not perform them. The aggrieved party can seek compensation for loss or damage caused by breach of contract. Compensation can claim for failure to discharge obligation resembling those created by contract. Although the existing Contract Act does not include the word online shopping but this law will be applicable to mitigate disputes based on online shopping.¹⁹

4.1.2 The Penal Code, 1860

The Penal Code 1860, one of the oldest statutes of the land contain some provisions ensuring the buyer s right which can be applied in respect of online shopping irregularities. Buyer can seek remedy for offences relating to weights and measures under this law. Sometimes it is seen that seller try to get more financial profit in their business by deceiving buyer. They take the tricky policy to cheat the buyer by delivering products in less quantity than the actual stipulated measures. Offences relating to fraudulent use of false instrument for weighing, fraudulent use of weight or measure, being in possession of false weight or measure, making or selling false weight or measure have been made punishable

¹⁹ Siddique, D., 2012. Law of Contract. Dhaka: Kamrul Book House. sec-73

both in terms of fine and imprisonment. Applying such provisions of law for the rights of online customers to get their product in stipulated quantity can be safeguarded.²⁰

4.1.3 The Sale of Goods Act, 1930

The Sale of Goods Act, 1930 governs the traditional contract relating to sale of goods. It has certain peculiar features such as, transfer of ownership of the goods, delivery of goods rights and duties of the buyer and seller, remedies for breach of contract, conditions and warranties implied under a contract for sale of goods etc. Certain difficulties relating to online shopping system can be mitigated through liberal interpretation of this law. According to this law if the seller delivers any goods less in quantity as he contracted to sell, the buyer may reject the product. Even if the seller wrongfully neglects or refuse to deliver any product, the buyer may sue for damages for non delivery. For breach of any warranty by the seller the buyer can sue for damages or reduce the price of the goods, on the other hand if any condition is breached the buyer may reject the goods. Through the statute of sale of goods act, the rights of an online seller can be ensured. Here if a buyer fails to take delivery of the products and fail to pay the price correctly then the seller can sue for recovery of price and damages.²¹

4.1.4 The Special Powers Act, 1974

In order to penalize for adulterated food, drinks, drugs or cosmetics the law of special powers act, 1974 can be enforced. According to this act any seller who adulterates foods or drinks to sell them; or offer, expose any product which has been rendered or has become noxious or in such a condition which is unfit for health or adulterates any drug or medical preparation and sell them to buyer will be punished with death penalty or with life imprisonment or with rigorous

²⁰ A.R.M.Borhanuddin, 2009. The Penal Code, 1860. 2nd ed, Dhaka: Titu publication; sec: 264-267

²¹ Mitra, A. k. s. a. J. k., 1956. Commercial Law and Industrial Law. 25th ed. Kolkata: The World Press Private Ltd.

imprisonment for fourteen years. The offender will also be charged with fine. Not only that, if a seller adulterates or sell or offers any cosmetic products (like hair oil, toilet soap) for sale which is harmful for skin, complexion or any part of body, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and with fine. These same provisions will be applicable in respect of online shopping system as well parallel with traditional shopping system.²²

4.1.5 The Standard of Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982

This law was enacted to make provision for the establishment of standards of weights and measures based on the metric system and units of measurement and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The law inter-alia, provides penalty for use of nonstandard weights or measures which may amount to three thousand taka or six months of imprisonment. This law can be used in order to give remedy in respect of online shopping system too where products are found below standard from weights and measures.²³

4.1.6 The Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution Ordinance, 1985

BSTI Ordinance provides for the establishment of an institution for The standardization, testing, metrology, quality, control, grading and marketing of goods. Section 30-32 protects certain rights of consumers by bringing some offences like improper use of standard mark, disregard of export or sale restrictions within the ambit of law. Such ordinance can be used to control online shopping problems in a befitting manner.

4.1.7 The Trade Mark Act, 2009

Available at:http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print section all.php?id=462;

Available at: http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print sections all.php?id=624: sec-32

²² Special Powers Act, 1974

²³ The standard of weights and measure ordinance, 1982

Section 71-78 of the Trade Mark Act are designed to suppress certain unfair trade practices relating to trade marks which have the tendency to deceive consumers. Remedies can be sought under these provisions against falsifying and falsely applying trademarks, selling and using false trade names, misrepresentation of trademarks etc. Sometimes many online sites try to cheat buyer by selling replica products or fake products using the name of a famous brand. Usually Seller used original trade marks upon cheap quality products to earn more profit. Such kind of offences can be remedied though the Trade Mark Act, 2009.

4.1.8 The Consumer Protection Act, 2009

This Statute provides protection of consumer rights and also to prevent any acts against consumer right and interest and other relevant issues. The Act mainly deals with the obligations of economic operators and products safety. It enjoins state organs to punish the offenses of economic operators who violate consumer rights and interests. It provides for various actions to be taken by the respective ministries against the production of products or services that are likely to induce grave or imminent dangers. The CRPA, 2009 also sets out comprehensive procedures to be followed by inspection agents to ensure the quality and safety of products (goods and services). It also allows for the establishment of a specialized institution to be in charge of fraud repression and inspections of imported and exported goods. The important features of this Act is

- Establishment of National Consumer Rights Protection Council and National Consumer Rights Protection Directorate
- 2. Provision for consumer education and concurrent remedy of civil and criminal redress

According to this Act complaint can be filled against the seller of the product or the service provider. Here seller of the product includes the producer, manufacturer, supplier and wholesaler or retailer of the product.

Two types of solutions can be obtained in case of offenses against consumer rights. They are criminal remedy (imprisonment, fine), civil remedy (obtaining compensation). The CRPA, 2009 is highly recommendable for the protection of online shopping rights. Here buyer can get relief in form of exchange of defective goods, compensation for injury, reimbursement of product price, imposing fine etc. Section 40-51 of the act can be used to give remedy to the aggrieved buyer of online shopping system of Bangladesh. In this case broader interpretation of the act can include the term online shopping .²⁴

4.1.9 Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006

Online shopping system sometimes contains cyber threat. At the time of shopping online sites record customer s necessary information like name, address, phone number, bank details, electronic information etc. It paves a way to hamper buyer s security. ICT Act, 2006 can help the suffered buyer to get rid out of this problem. The purpose of this Act is to guarantee the legal security of documentary communications. It provides for appropriate punishment for offences relating to computer or computer system. The Act states some activities as cyber crime such as-illegal access, illegal data collection, intentionally obstructing computer system, spamming and unwanted mails etc.²⁵

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²⁴ The Consumer Protection Act, 2009

Available at: https://dncrp.portal.gov.bd/site/page/81410ae5-17d8-456c-8cff-4bbd8742d809/The-Consumers%E2%80%99-Right-Protection-Act,-2009-

²⁵ Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006, Available at: http://bcc.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bcc.portal.gov.bd/page/97cc59c3_8f51_4d39_a84b_8c0b39ae3f62/ICT_ACT_2006.pdf

Chapter 5

REMEDIES AGAINST ONLINE SHOPPING IRREGULARITIES COMPARATIVE TO OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

5.1 U.S.A.

Over 75% of American people are shopping through online at least once a month. Amazon.com has the largest market share in the United States. As of May 2018, a survey found two-thirds of Americans had bought something from Amazon (92% of those who had bought anything online), with 40% of online shoppers buying something from Amazon at least once a month. The survey found shopping began at amazon.com 44% of the time, compared to a general search engine at 33%. It estimated 75 million Americans subscribe to Amazon Prime and 35 million more use someone else's account.²⁶

Here some regal consumer protection acts for American people are found. Here FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (FTC) plays a great role for consumer rights protection. If any consumer gets victim of online fraud he or she can easily complain to FTC and FTC makes sure that the victim can get refund. Victim can easily file complain to FTC on online. The FTC enforces consumer protection laws to stop illegal business practices and get refunds to people who lost money.²⁷

²⁶ Alina Selyukh, What Americans Told Us About Online Shopping Says A Lot About Amazon June, npr, published 6, 2018 https://www.npr.org/2018/06/06/615137239/what-americans-told-us-about-online-shopping-says-a-lot-about-amazon

²⁷ Recent FTC Cases Resulting in Refunds, FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION, Accessed August 24, 2020, https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/cases-proceedings/refunds

The FTC s Bureau of Consumer Protection stops unfair, deceptive and fraudulent business practices by collecting reports from consumers and conducting investigations, suing companies and people that break the law, developing rules to maintain a fair marketplace, and educating consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities.²⁸

5.2 U.K.

The United Kingdom is one of the leading countries in the western world. As one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council and a founding member of NATO, the UK is an influential country with an important economy. A report from the Ecommerce Foundation shows that 7.94 percent of the country s gross domestic product is made up by e-commerce sales. Ecommerce in the UK was expected to be worth slightly over 200 billion Euros at the end of 2019.²⁹ A study from the Ecommerce Foundation in 2019 shows that PayPal is, by far, the most popular payment method in the United Kingdom. Over 40 percent of buyers have used PayPal at least once in 2018. Credit cards (23.7 percent) are also popular, followed by prepaid cards (17.2 percent).³⁰

There are some obvious law and protection measures for the UK s people. Consumer rights protection campaign is found in UK, they help the citizen of UK to know their rights. Under The Consumer Rights Act 2015, consumer can easily get remedies against any kind of irregularities of online shopping. There is Citizens Advice consumer helpline. They can use Relay UK with an app or a text phone. There is no extra charge to use it.³¹ They can ask the seller to deliver the item again if he or she does not get ordered item.

The Consumer Rights Act 2015 gives the consumers many proper rights:

²⁸ Bureau of Consumer Protection, FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION, Accessed August 24, 2020, https://www.ftc.gov/about-ftc/bureaus-offices/bureau-consumer-protection

²⁹ "Online Retail Datasets, imrg, accessed October 21, 2020, https://www.imrg.org/data-and-reports

³⁰ "Ecommerce in The United Kingdom, Ecommerce News, last update: August 2020, https://ecommercenews.eu/ecommerce-in-europe/ecommerce-the-united-kingdom/

Ontact the consumer helpline, citizens advice, accessed October 22, 2020, https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-aconsumer-issue/

- Right to reject
- Partial rejection of goods
- Time limit for short-term right to reject
- Right to repair or replacement
- Right to price reduction or final right to reject³²

5.3 China

In China, almost anything can be bought in online, from a luxury car to online courses, or even pet grooming services — the wealth of choice is inexhaustible. Internet shopping has transformed daily life routine in China. People shop whenever they want, wherever they want, and have it express-delivered at minimum cost — in a matter of hours in larger cities. Advanced logistic networks, utilizing big data, cloud computing, smart robots and drone-based delivery ensure speedy delivery to almost anywhere in China.

Traditional shopping can be tedious and time-consuming in a hectic country plagued by traffic jams. With a growing percentage of Chinese people enjoying increased spending power, more and more people are doing their shopping in online, which offers greater ease and convenience especially for busy urbanites. Geographical distance too is no longer a barrier. Easy-to-use mobile apps and payment systems have simplified and fuelled the growth of online shopping. Online retail or E-tail - is not only embraced by young, tech-savvy millennial, but also older generations. 94% of Chinese users use mobile payments, while only 45% of Americans will³³

China Consumers Association (CCA) is a national organization which aim is to monitor goods and services; to protect consumer rights and interests; to provide guidance on consumer activities and development and to promote a healthy environment for a socialist market economy. CCA was founded in December 1984 and is made up of 3,279 local and grassroots consumer

³² Consumer Rights Act 2015

Avaiable at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/15/contents/enacted

³³ Beatriz Estay, 16 Online Shopping Statistics: How Many People Shop Online

associations nationwide.³⁴ China's State Administration of Industry and Commerce (SAIC) released for public comment the draft Regulations on the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of Consumer Rights and Interests (Draft Implementing Regulations; Chinese only), which are intended to implement China's amended Law on the Protection of Consumer Rights and Interests. Consumer Rights Protection Law or CRPL; was first enacted in 1993, the CRPL was amended in 2009 and then again in late 2013.

According to SAIC, the Draft Implementing Regulations are meant to enhance the protection of consumer rights in areas of high public concern. The draft addresses, among other issues, the timely recall of defective products, return policies, consumer data protection, and prepaid cards. The Draft Implementation Regulations would impose new obligations on manufacturers, retailers, and service providers (hereinafter referred to as operators), with failure to comply resulting in administrative penalties and civil liabilities.³⁵

In Bangladesh there is no active bureau or commission to protect consumer s rights like other developed countries. Even it is hard to find out which law can directly protect consumers right for online shopping. In the comparison to other developed countries there are complete guide lines for online business, so that they can care consumer protections and rights. In where Bangladesh doesn t have proper guide lines for online business, so there are many lacking to take care of consumer protections and rights.

³⁴ China Consumers Association (CCA), consumers international, accessed october 22, 2020, https://www.consumersinternational.org/members/members/china-consumers-association-cca/

³⁵ Ashwin Kaja, John Balzano, China Releases Draft Implementing Regulations for Consumer Rights Protection Law, published August 26, 2016,

https://www.global policy watch.com/2016/08/china-releases-draft-implementing-regulations-for-consumer-rights-protection-law/

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Recommendations

Online shopping is a growing sector in Bangladesh and the growth is still positive which clearly indicates that the future prospects of online shopping in Bangladesh is flourishing. The online shopping has already captured consumers from almost every age, group, genders and distant. As a result, the numbers of online shopping websites are increasing every day. In this perspective, the sellers, the consumers and the regulatory authorities should be careful for fair business. So three folds of recommendations could be found here. First some factors that Bangladeshi online entrepreneurs need to look over are mentioned below:

- a. Delivery of better service and focusing on improved customer experience should be increased.
- b. The complaints made by the customers should be attended without any delay to increase faith in the shopping site.
- c. Plans need to be developed to identify other factors that affect customers satisfaction.
- d. Since online shopping is a new sector for Bangladesh so before entering into the competition customers requirements and rights must be researched.
- e. The online privacy and safety rules should be maintained.
- f. There should always be double checking to ensure error free products go to customers.

g. More preference to website content should be given so that customers have a clear idea of the product they will be getting.

Secondly, Bangladesh has highlighted as DIGITAL BANGLADESH. And the people of Bangladesh prefer innovative ideas, so here there is a huge possibility of online shopping. Another reason is people are now become busier they don t have enough time for visiting the store and shopping. So they are more depending on online shopping. But for safety and getting proper consumer rights they should be careful to few things. For online payment system cash on delivery option highly recommended to be used. Carefully read the terms and conditions, including the small print. These terms and conditions should be available on the merchant s website. Check that the merchant s address details are available on the webpage and save or print them in case you need to return any items. If no address details are given, you should proceed with caution. Make a note of the URL address of the shop. Read what the merchant has to say about delivery costs, applicable taxes etc. Before placing an order they have to make sure that receiver address should be easier to reach. If any consumer suffers for any kind of irregularities of online shopping they should complain immediately to the service provider. And if they fail to answer appropriately then they should take the help of consumer right protection act.

And thirdly for legal and regulatory authorities, there are some findings for online shopping irregularities in Bangladesh -

There is no particular law to provide legal remedies in respect of online shopping system in Bangladesh.

Traditional backdated laws are used to provide solution to the disputes relating to online shopping matters.

Aggrieved party usually does not feel any interest to establish their rights through judicial procedure.

Parties relating to online shopping disputes find legal procedure more complicated rather than they mutually mitigate difficulties.

So the regulatory authorities should look into few steps:

Separate specific provision relating to online shopping issues should be included in the existing provisions of the Contract Act, 1872 and the Sale of Goods Act, 1930.

The laws of Penal code 1860 and Special Powers Act, 1974 should be strictly implemented by the legislature to safeguard online shopping related rights.

Separate provision relating to online shopping should be incorporated in the Standard Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982 to ensure stipulated quantity of products to the customers.

Provision relating to investigation of original product s trademark in online shopping sector should be incorporated specifically in the Trade Mark Act, 2009.

As a new approach, online shopping has gained much popularity all over the world. Online Shopping System helps in buying of goods, products and services from online by choosing the listed products from websites. In Bangladesh the number of online shopping users is increasing rapidly. In order to promote this sector in wide area awareness among customers relating to their rights should be increased. Government should ensure more promotional works to develop this shopping procedure. Complexity in legal arena to protect online consumers rights should be removed. Traditional laws should be amended in broader aspects. A specific law ensuring online shopping related rights with the compilation of all required solution should be made by the legislature. Existing

laws, specifically Contract Act, Sale of Good Act and Consumer Protection Act must be amended to cope up with online shopping difficulties.

6.2 Conclusion

From this study we come to conclusion that through the e-commerce, Bangladesh can be prosperous in the business arena of the world. All the major countries of the world are trying to embrace this technology with open arm. We can not just wait and see this tremendous phenomenon. We have to take active part in adopting this technology. If we become unsuccessful, the ray of modern era will never come to our country. So for the betterment of the nation we have to take drastic measures as early as possible. Our hope for future lies in the hand of e-commerce.

Every business requires a good marketing mix to introduce, grow and sustain in this highly competitive market of economy. At the day before yesterday marketers were rarely looking at online based marketing efforts, instead, they were just depending on conventional marketing system. With the presence of highly growing internet users, relative low cost and easy going strategies, online shopping is also becoming so crucial for every business hub. By getting the balance of offline and online advertising right, marketing mix will help to provide everything firms need to gain leads, increase sales, improve customer retention, and improve the company profits. Online shopping practice in Bangladesh is now very popular now-a-days. Hence, it has immense facility in commercial arena, there are some irregularities too. We have to utilize it with positive dimension. This discussion is extended with an examination of legal available remedies in respect of online shopping irregularities.

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