

# Govt plans 'Right to Repair' framework

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**In news**— The Union government is working on a “Right to Repair” framework to cut down restrictive practices introduced by some manufacturers so that people can get goods such as consumer durables, phones and cars fixed on their own.

## **About “Right to Repair” framework –**

- Concerned over makers of cars, mobiles and other consumer goods monopolising repair and spare parts market, the government plans to **make it mandatory for them to share with customers product details necessary for repair by self or third parties.**
- The Department of Consumer Affairs said that it has set up **a committee chaired by Nidhi Khare**, Additional Secretary **to develop a comprehensive framework on ‘Right to Repair’.**
- It also comprises industry and consumer bodies as well as academics and government officials.
- As per the committee, manufacturers retain proprietary control over spare parts, including on their design, and the government feels that this kind of **monopoly on repair processes infringes the customer’s “right to choose”.**
- Besides, warranty cards of several products mention that getting them repaired from an outfit not recognised by the makers would lead to **customers losing their warranty benefit.**
- **The rationale behind the ‘Right to Repair’ is that when customers buy a product, it is inherent that they must own it completely for which the consumers should be able to repair and modify the product with ease** and at reasonable cost, without being captive to the whims of manufacturers for repairs.

- **The objective of the proposed framework will be to empower consumers, harmonise trade between the original equipment manufacturers** and the third-party buyers and sellers, and reduce e-waste.
- In July 2022, the committee held its first meeting where key sectors for 'Right to Repair' were identified.
- **Sectors, including farming equipment, mobile phones/tablets, consumer durables and automobiles/automobile equipment were listed out.**
- During the deliberations, it was felt that the tech **companies should provide complete knowledge and access to manuals, schematics, and software updates** and to which the software license shouldn't limit the transparency of the product in sale.
- **Further, the parts and tools to service devices, including diagnostic tools should be made available to third parties**, including individuals so that the product can be repaired in case of minor glitches.
- According to the statement, **once rolled out in India, the framework will become a "game-changer" for the sustainability of the products** and serve as a catalyst for employment generation through Aatmanirbhar Bharat by allowing third-party repairs.
- **The committee has pointed out that manufacturers are encouraging a culture of 'planned obsolescence'**. This is a system whereby the design of any gadget is such that **it lasts a particular time only** and after that particular period it has to be mandatorily replaced. When contracts fail to cede full control to the buyer- the legal rights of owners are damaged.
- Thus, **restricting the repair of products forces consumers to deliberately make a choice to purchase** a new model of that product.
- However, the department pointed out that it has been observed that the Right to Repair is getting severely restricted, and not only there is a considerable delay in repair but at times the products are repaired at an

exorbitantly high price.

- The department highlighted that the Prime Minister of India in June 2022, launched the concept of LiFE movement (Lifestyle for Environment) in India. This includes the concept of reuse and recycling various consumer products.

**Note:**

- **The right to repair has been recognised in many countries across the globe, including the US, UK and European Union.**
- **In the US, the Federal Trade Commission has directed manufacturers to remedy unfair anti-competitive practices** and asked them to make sure that consumers can make repairs, either themselves or by a third-party agency.