

ENHANCING SRI LANKA'S LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON ELECTRONIC CONTRACTS: SAFEGUARDING E-CONSUMER RIGHTS FOR A THRIVING DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

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As in many nations, the evolution of e-commerce in Sri Lanka has created new opportunities for trade, innovation, and inclusion, but also new risks for consumers, including fraud, data breaches, and a lack of mechanisms to seek redress. The current Legal framework for consumer law is fragmented and confusing, and the laws themselves do not adequately address electronic transactions, cross-border enforcement, and digital consumer rights. Consumer rights in Sri Lanka are embedded in a slow, disordered system, unlike in countries like the UK, Singapore, or Malaysia, where they are ingrained in law, enforcement, and technology. The research examines how Sri Lanka's laws on electronic contracts and e-consumer rights can be enhanced to meet the demands of a modern digital marketplace. Through a doctrinal and comparative approach, the study examines Sri Lanka's domestic law and case law, alongside international best practices, and explores the potential of mechanisms such as Online Dispute Resolution and secure payment systems to enhance consumer welfare. This highlights how gaps in legal and institutional frameworks create significant challenges, undermining consumer confidence and hampering the development of the national digital economy. Therefore, the study calls for a separate E-Commerce Consumer Protection Act to rationalize modern laws with a view to augmenting enforceability capacity as well as to pave a way for a safe, inclusive, and competitive digital market that facilitates sustainable economic development and consumer confidence, which is essential to be attained in the digital world.

Keywords: *E-Commerce Law; Electronic Contracts; E-Consumer Protection; Online Dispute Resolution; Digital Economy Reform.*