

Common charger for all mobile devices on cards

Dept of Consumer Affairs calls top players for a meeting today to discuss issue

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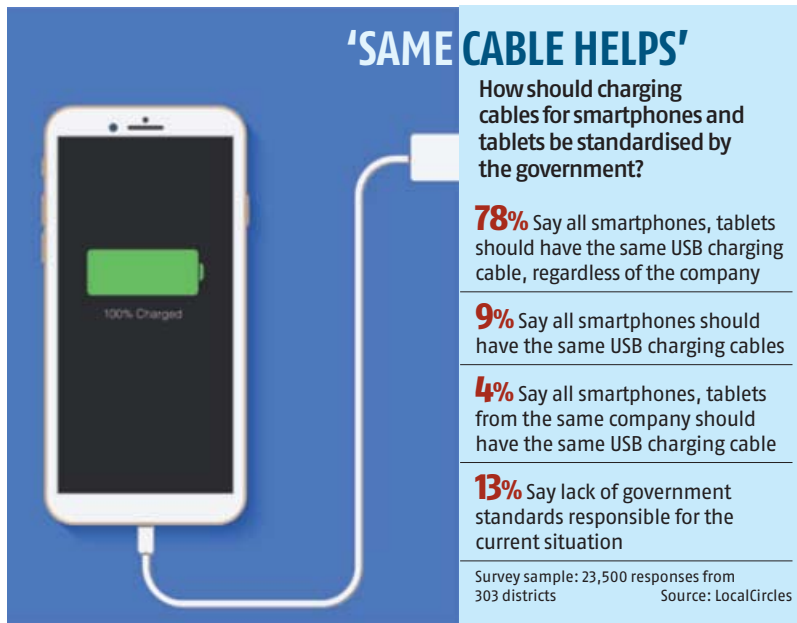
Officials from the department of consumer affairs are meeting industry representatives on Wednesday to evaluate the possibility of a common charger for all mobile devices, including smartphones, tablets and wearable devices.

This move — if implemented — will make things easier for consumers, said senior officials from the ministry of consumer affairs. According to them, smartphone makers like Samsung, Xiaomi, Apple and other major players have been called for the meeting.

Central Consumer Protection Authority's (CCPA's) chief commissioner Nidhi Khare said, "We will be presenting the problem of many consumers that even if they have different devices of the same brand, they need to buy separate chargers. Similarly, if they are using multiple mobiles of different brands, they still have to get separate chargers. This has become a cause of harassment to the consumers."

Khare said, "This demand will not be unique to India and we are already seeing such demand being made by users globally. We may recommend a proposal to have a common charger for the basic keypad-based mobile phones. And, the other type of charger can be used for all smartphones, irrespective of their brands. This will also reduce e-waste."

The meeting takes lead from the recent European Commission's (EC's) move, which passed a resolution that all smartphone makers will be required to support



USB-C as a single charging standard by 2024. It would be for all mobile devices across EU nations.

Under the new rule, consumers in the European Block will no longer need a different charging device and cable every time they buy a new mobile phone. This, in turn, will make the EU more sustainable, reduce e-waste and make consumer lives easier.

According to reports, European lawmakers expect that going ahead, phones and similar gadgets won't need a charger in the box, as buyers will already have the appropriate accessories at home.

"The EU estimates that the legislation could save consumers euro 250 million a year on unnecessary charger purchases. It could cut down on around 11,000 tonnes of e-waste annually," said a report by *The Verge*.

The issue is much more crucial in India because OEM (original equipment manufacturer) accessories are expensive. Users end up buying generic chargers and charging cables, which has led to fatal accidents. According to a latest LocalCircles survey, seven in 10 consumers believe that mobile devices have different charging cables in order to maximise the sale of accessories.