

Fake Products, Real Consequences: IP House - ISB Research Reveals the Human Cost of Counterfeiting in India

Research reveals that Indian consumers remain exposed to counterfeit goods in everyday purchases, with consequences for consumer safety and market trust.

DELHI, INDIA, July 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nearly four in five Indian consumers have

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Jan van Voorn, CEO, IP House

purchased a counterfeit product at least once, and over half of those purchasers did so without realising it, according to new research from IP House and the Indian School of Business (ISB) Institute of Data Science (IIDS). The report, [Counterfeit Crisis in India: Consumers, Consumption and Consequences](#), examines the scale, human cost, and consumer reality of counterfeit goods in India across six high-risk product categories: medicines, food and beverages, electronics, children's toys, cosmetics

and automobile parts. The research examines consumer perceptions of the links between organised crime and the manufacture, distribution, and sale of counterfeit goods, and how awareness of these links reframes counterfeits from being perceived as a harmless bargain to recognised as a consumer safety and public health threat.

Drawing on a nationally distributed YouGov study of over one thousand online urban Indian consumers, alongside sector analysis and documented cases of counterfeit-related harm, the report details how fakes circulate through every mainstream retail channel. Consumers are often exposed not because they actively seek fakes, but because authenticity is increasingly difficult to judge.

According to enforcement bodies such as Interpol and Europol, counterfeiting is a lucrative illicit enterprise regularly utilised by transnational criminal networks. While 62% of respondents recognise that counterfeit products pose a serious risk to consumer health, the report found that many consumers still view counterfeiting as simply a market or economic issue rather than a pervasive form of illicit activity.

Furthermore, the findings expose a critical perception gap around criminality: only 44% initially recognise the sale of counterfeits as a crime, but once organised crime is clearly defined, 56%

agree that organised criminal networks are involved in the manufacture, distribution, and sale of counterfeit products and 50% believe that increasing public awareness of organised crime's involvement is an important measure for protecting consumers from counterfeits. This disconnect matters. When counterfeiting is seen merely as a cheaper substitute, the social stigma around it weakens, reporting falls, and the networks behind it can continue to operate with limited visibility.

“Every counterfeit carries a cost,” said Jan van Voorn, CEO of IP House. “The reality is that the counterfeit trade is closely linked to highly organised criminal networks that exploit global supply chains and online marketplaces. They peddle fakes for enormous profit, endangering consumers and undermining legitimate businesses. Confronting the realities of counterfeiting requires government, brands, platforms, and consumers to act together. IP House is proud to partner with ISB to bring this issue into clearer public view, because safety and trust in everyday products should never be negotiable.”

Professor Manish Gangwar, Executive Director, ISB Institute of Data Science (IIDS), emphasised, “Consumer awareness is necessary, but it is no longer sufficient. The need of the hour is to adopt a holistic and dynamic approach to tackling counterfeiting. Protecting consumers requires a shift towards technology-enabled solutions that leverage artificial intelligence, digital authentication, and intelligence-led enforcement to identify and disrupt counterfeit networks before they reach consumers. At IIDS, we are committed to advancing evidence-based technologies and policy frameworks that strengthen trust across India's digital and physical marketplaces.”

The report finds that counterfeit trade in India is:

- An illicit enterprise, in which organised criminal networks manufacture and distribute counterfeit products globally, generating substantial profits at relatively low risk while intersecting with other serious unlawful activities.
- A public safety threat across essential goods—from medicines and food to cosmetics, toys, and auto parts—that can cause poisoning, burns, allergic reactions, fires, injuries, and, in documented cases, fatalities.
- A market challenge, with 79% of respondents reporting that they have purchased counterfeit products at least once, and 54% said those purchases were made unknowingly, demonstrating how difficult it can be for consumers to identify counterfeit products in real market conditions.
- A cross-channel consumer risk, with counterfeit purchases occurring through street markets, online marketplaces, social media, and physical retail. While consumers often associate fakes with informal markets, the report finds that convenience and trust in established platforms can lower vigilance online.

The report documents the consequences of counterfeit trade across categories that touch daily life. Methanol-laced illicit liquor has caused mass fatalities in multiple states. Counterfeit and contaminated medicines have been linked to treatment failures and child deaths. Unsafe electronics, toys, and auto parts can cause harm before consumers realise anything is wrong.

As such, the report calls for a coordinated response to counterfeiting in India, including:

- More consistent, intelligence-led enforcement across local police, customs agents, regulators, online platforms, and brand owners.
- Specialised intellectual property and consumer safety task forces for high-risk counterfeit categories.
- Consumer education that moves beyond general warnings and gives clear guidance on how to verify, avoid, and report suspected counterfeits.

About IP House

IP House is a global one-stop-shop intellectual property protection and enforcement company delivering end-to-end solutions across online and offline environments. It combines advanced data intelligence with investigative and field capabilities to identify, analyse, and disrupt IP infringement and fraud across digital platforms and physical supply chains.

Working with rights holders, industry associations, law enforcement, and legal partners, IP House supports the full enforcement lifecycle, from monitoring and intelligence gathering to investigations, evidence development, and coordinated enforcement, helping clients tackle complex, cross-border infringement at scale. [Learn more about IP House.](#)

IP House Media Contact:

Sydney Redden
Sydney.redden@ip-house.com
+19134888874

About ISB Institute of Data Science

The ISB Institute of Data Science (IIDS) is an interdisciplinary research and capacity-building centre applying data science, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies to societal and economic challenges. Working at the intersection of technology, policy, and governance, IIDS collaborates with governments, industry, and global institutions across fields including cybersecurity, digital finance, misinformation, and digital piracy.

The institute produces high-impact research and policy frameworks that inform national and international decision-making, including work on the economic, security, and public safety implications of piracy and counterfeit ecosystems. [Learn more about the ISB Institute of Data Science.](#)

ISB Media Contact:

Samuel Sundar
Samuel_Sundar@isb.edu
+91 9866661680

Sydney Redden
IP House
+1 913-488-8874

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