

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.1211

TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.12.2022

UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICE THROUGH E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

1211. SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL
SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is bringing out a standard for publishing product reviews on e-commerce platforms in the country;
- (b) if so, details thereof;
- (c) the number of complaints related to forgery, unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements received from consumers using such platforms, if so, the action taken thereon;
- (d) the manner in which Government intends to safeguard and protect consumer interest from fake and deceptive reviews on e-commerce and other social media platforms;
- (e) whether Government is also ready to make legislation for punishment for unfair trade practice or violation of consumer rights; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) , (b) & (d) : The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has notified framework on 'Online Consumer Reviews — Principles and Requirements for their Collection, Moderation and Publication' on 23.11.2022 for safeguarding and protecting consumer interest from fake and deceptive reviews in e-commerce. The standards are voluntary and are applicable to every online platform which publishes consumer reviews. The guiding principles of the standard are integrity, accuracy, privacy, security, transparency, accessibility and responsiveness.

(c), (e) & (f) : The number of complaints received on National Consumer Helpline related to frauds, unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements during the financial year 2022-23 (01.04.2022 - 30.11.2022) is 9943.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is the primary legislation for protecting and safeguarding the interests of consumers.

Under the Act, the District, State and National Commissions have been set up to provide speedy, inexpensive and effective redressal of consumer grievances in case of unfair trade practices and violation of consumer rights. Section 39 of the Act provides for Orders which the commissions may pass in case of unfair trade practices.

Further, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has been established under the Act to regulate matters relating to violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the interests of public and consumers and to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.

CCPA is empowered, under Section 20 of the Act, to pass orders as may be necessary in case violation of consumer rights or unfair trade practice by a person including recall or withdrawal of goods which are dangerous or unsafe, reimbursement of the prices of goods so recalled to purchasers and discontinuation of practices which are unfair and prejudicial to consumers' interest
