

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2442
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.12.2024

COMPLAINTS AGAINST E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS FOR CONSUMER RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

2442. DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN

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

- (a) the number of complaints filed against e-commerce platforms in 2024, including data on the nature of these complaints and resolution rates;
- (b) the recent updates to the Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020, to tackle emerging challenges in the digital marketplace; and
- (c) the specific guidelines or penalties initiated by the Ministry to regulate and curb the use of dark patterns on digital platforms?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI B.L VERMA)

(a) : The details regarding number of complaints filed against e-commerce platforms in 2024 including the nature of these complaints are at **Annexure**.

(b) & (c) : Department of Consumer Affairs is continuously working for consumer protection and empowerment of consumers by enactment of progressive legislations. With a view to modernize the framework governing the consumer protection in the new era of globalization, technologies, e-commerce markets etc. Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was enacted.

To safeguard consumers from unfair trade practices in e-commerce, the Department of Consumer Affairs has also notified the Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020 under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. These rules, inter-alia, outline the responsibilities of e-commerce entities and specify the liabilities of marketplace and inventory e-commerce entities, including provisions for customer grievance redressal.

The National Consumer Helpline (NCH) administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs has emerged as a single point of access to consumers across the country for their grievance redressal at a pre-litigation stage. Consumers can register their grievances from all over the country in 17 languages through a toll-free number 1915. These grievances can be registered on Integrated Grievance Redressal Mechanism (INGRAM), an omni-channel IT enabled central portal, through various channels- WhatsApp, SMS, e-mail, NCH app, web portal, Umang app as per their convenience. 1004 companies, who have voluntarily partnered with NCH, as part of the 'Convergence' programme directly respond to these grievances according to their redressal process, and revert by providing a feedback to the complainant on the portal. Complaints against those companies, who have not partnered with National Consumer Helpline, are forwarded to the company's email id for redressal.

Dark patterns involve using design and choice architecture to deceive, coerce, or influence consumers into making choices that are not in their best interest. Dark patterns encompass a wide range of manipulative practices such as drip pricing, disguised advertisement, bait and switch, false urgency etc. Such practices fall under the category of “unfair trade practices” as defined in the Sub-section 47 under Section 2 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 18 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, has already issued “Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023” on 30th November, 2023 for prevention and regulation of dark patterns listing 13 specified dark patterns identified in e-Commerce sector.

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.

ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2442 FOR 17.12.2024 REGARDING COMPLAINTS AGAINST E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS FOR CONSUMER RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

| Period | Sector | Grievances registered | Grievances disposed off |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 01.01.2024 to 30.11.2024 | E- Commerce | 397333 | 367704 |

| S. No. | Nature of Grievances | Grievances Received on NCH |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Deficiency in Services | 59723 |
| 2 | Delivery of Wrong Product | 54563 |
| 3 | Delivery of Defective / Damage Product | 53285 |
| 4 | Paid amount not refunded | 50997 |
| 5 | Non-Delivery of Product | 42781 |
| 6 | Delay in Delivery of Product | 27394 |
| 7 | Replacement / Refund not provided - As per policy | 19020 |
| 8 | Amount Debited but Not Credited to Beneficiary | 15315 |
| 9 | Product / Product Accessories Missing | 15077 |
| 10 | Account Blocked/Service Barred | 5913 |
| 11 | Others | 53265 |
| Grand Total | | 397333 |
