

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2594
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.08.2025

MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS BY COACHING CENTRES

2594. SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI:

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

- (a) whether the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has observed that coaching centres are not adhering to the Guidelines for the Prevention of Misleading Advertisement in the Coaching Centres, 2024;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether CCPA recently issued notices to certain institutes; and
- (d) if so, the action taken by CCPA against misleading advertisements, unfair trade practices and violations of consumer rights by coaching centres?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

(SHRI B.L VERMA)

(a) to (d) : 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 Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was enacted.

Salient features of the new Consumer Protection Act, 2019 are establishment of a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA); simplification of the adjudication process in the Consumer Commissions such as enhancing pecuniary jurisdiction of the Consumer Commissions, online filing of complaint from the Consumer Commission having jurisdiction over the place of work/residence of the consumer irrespective of the place of transaction, videoconferencing for hearing, deemed admissibility of complaints if admissibility is not decided within 21 days of filing; provision of product liability; penal provisions for manufacture/sale of adulterated products/spurious goods; provision for making rules for prevention of unfair trade practice in e-commerce and direct selling.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides for a three tier quasi-judicial machinery at District, State and Central levels commonly known as “Consumer Commissions” for protection of the rights of consumers and to provide simple and speedy redressal of consumer disputes including those related with unfair trade practices. The Consumer Commissions are empowered to give relief of a specific nature and award compensation to consumers, wherever appropriate.

Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), an executive agency, came into existence on 24.07.2020. It is designed to intervene, to prevent consumer detriment arising from unfair trade practices and to initiate class action(s), including the enforcement of recalls, refunds and return of products. Its core mandate is to prevent and regulate false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the public interest.

The CCPA, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 18 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, has 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. These dark patterns include false urgency, Basket Sneaking, Confirm shaming, forced action, Subscription trap, Interface Interference, Bait and switch, Drip Pricing, Disguised Advertisements, Nagging, Trick Wording, Saas Billing and Rogue Malwares.

The CCPA has also notified the Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022 on 9th June, 2022. These guidelines inter-alia provide for; (a) conditions for an advertisement to be non-misleading and valid; (b) certain stipulations in respect of bait advertisements and free claim advertisements; and, (c) duties of manufacturer, service provider, advertiser and advertising agency. These guidelines states that due diligence is required for endorsement of advertisements such that any endorsement in an advertisement must reflect the genuine, reasonably current opinion of the individual, group or organisation making such representation and must be based on adequate information about, or experience with, the identified goods, product or service and must not otherwise be deceptive.

Further to strengthen consumer protection, the CCPA enacted the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Greenwashing and Misleading Environmental Claims, 2024 (effective 15th October 2024), mandating transparency in environmental claims and the Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements in the Coaching Sector, 2024 (effective 13th November 2024), addressing false claims, exaggerated success rates and unfair practices in coaching institutes.

The CCPA has imposed a penalty of ₹ 85,60,000 on 25 coaching institutes for misleading advertisements. Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), through National Consumer Helpline (NCH), has successfully secured refunds to the aspirants and students in the education sector. These students, enrolled in coaching centres for Civil Services, Engineering Course and other programmes, were previously denied rightful refunds despite following the terms and conditions set forth by the coaching institutes. The action by the Department has helped students receive compensation for unfulfilled services, late classes, or cancelled courses, ensuring they do not bear the financial burden of unfair business practices.

Action has also been taken by the CCPA against various entities including e-commerce platforms for affecting consumers, as a class, for violation of consumer rights, false and misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices as defined under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. CCPA has taken actions to regulate matters affecting class of consumers with reference to the violation of consumer rights, misleading advertisement and unfair trade practices as defined under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Various directions were issued including discontinuation or modification of the advertisements besides imposition of penalties to protect the rights of consumers as a class and a penalty amount of ₹ 1,08,85,000 has been realized so far. Action has also been taken against the sale of domestic pressure cookers that do not meet compulsory BIS standards on e-commerce platforms. Additionally, as per CCPA's directions, travel companies have refunded Rs. 1,454 Crores to consumers for cancelled flights due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Also, subsequent to CCPA's intervention, an e-commerce platform discontinued the practice of automatically adding Rs. 1 per ticket towards charity contribution in the ticket (a form of Basket Sneaking dark pattern), in the form of pre-tick format (a form of forced consent dark pattern). An airline modified the manner in which it used to offer insurance at the time of purchase of tickets (a form of confirm shaming dark pattern).
