

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

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1000**  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.12.2025**

**E-COMMERCE: LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN REVIEWS**

1000. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

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

- (a) whether the Ministry is aware that most e-commerce platforms in the country are not publishing negative reviews from customers thereby blocking transparency norms;
- (b) if so, what steps have been taken in this regard;
- (c) whether any guidelines have been issued by Government for compliance of voluntary standards for online reviews by the e-commerce platforms; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**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 Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was enacted.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has notified framework on 'Online Consumer Reviews — Principles and Requirements for their Collection, Moderation and Publication' for safeguarding and protecting consumer interest from fake and deceptive reviews in e-commerce. It lays down the process which demonstrates the commitment of consumer review sites that they value their customers and provide reviews that can be trusted. The standard is voluntary and is applicable to every online platform which publishes consumer reviews. The guiding principles of the standard are integrity, accuracy, privacy, security, transparency, accessibility and responsiveness.

Fake online consumer review means a consumer review which is not collected, moderated or published in adherence with IS 19000:2022, of BIS (*Online Consumer Reviews — Principles and Requirements for their Collection, Moderation and Publication*) that can deceive, mislead or trick users to do something they originally did not intend or want to do, by subverting or impairing the consumer autonomy, decision making or choice, amounting unfair trade practice or misleading advertisement or violation of consumer rights; BIS standard 9000:2022 mandates Rejection of a Consumer Review. The review administrator shall reject a consumer review, prior to publication, if: a) It is discovered to be fraudulent; (6.6 ).

The guiding principles of the standard are integrity, accuracy, privacy, security, transparency, accessibility and responsiveness. The standard prescribes specific responsibilities for the review author and the review administrator. For review author, these include confirming acceptance of terms and conditions, providing contact information and for review administrator, these include safeguarding personal information and training of staff.

The standard provides for responsibilities of organization including developing a code of practice, and necessary stipulations for terms and conditions like accessibility, criteria, and ensuring content does not contain financial information etc.

The standard also provides for methods for verification of review author through email address, identification by telephone call or SMS, confirming registration by clicking on a link, using captcha system etc. to check traceability and genuineness of the review author.

"Unfair trade practice" [Section 2(47) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019] encompasses deceptive methods such as misrepresenting product standards, falsely advertising old goods as new, claiming unverified sponsorship or benefits, offering misleading warranties, misrepresenting prices, or disparaging competitors' goods or services. These provisions ensure accountability, transparency and fairness, safeguarding consumer interests in a dynamic marketplace.

Section 2(28) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 defines "misleading advertisement" in relation to any product or service, as an advertisement, which— (i) falsely describes such product or service; or (ii) gives a false guarantee to, or is likely to mislead the consumers as to the nature, substance, quantity or quality of such product or service; or (iii) conveys an express or implied representation which, if made by the manufacturer or seller or service provider thereof, would constitute an unfair trade practice; or (iv) deliberately conceals important information.

The Department of Consumer Affairs has notified the Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020 under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 to safeguard consumers from unfair trade practices in e-commerce. 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 Central Consumer Protection Authority, 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.

In furtherance, CCPA issued an Advisory in terms of Consumer Protection Act, 2019 on Self-Audit by E-Commerce Platforms for detecting the Dark Patterns on their platforms to create a fair, ethical and consumer-centric digital ecosystem dated 05.06.2025. 26 leading e-commerce platforms have voluntarily submitted their self-declaration letters confirming compliance with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.

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