

Government of India
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Department of Consumer Affairs

RAJYA SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. *117

TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.02.2026

USE OF DARK PATTERNS BY E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

*117. SHRI A. A. RAHIM:

Will the MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry is aware of the use of manipulative user interface designs, commonly referred to as “Dark Patterns” by e-commerce and delivery apps to influence purchases;
- (b) the enforcement actions initiated against e-commerce platforms for alleged use of Dark Patterns during the last two years, with a list of firms involved;
- (c) whether any assessment has been conducted on the prevalence of such practices across digital marketplaces, including the impact on consumer rights, choice and fair pricing; and
- (d) the steps taken to strengthen regulatory oversight to curb Dark Patterns and protect consumers from deceptive digital marketing and design practices?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

(a) to (d) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*117 FOR 10.02.2026 REGARDING USE OF DARK PATTERNS BY E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS ASKED BY SHRI A. A. RAHIM.

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 Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was enacted.

Therefore, 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 consumer grievance redressal.

Dark patterns involve using practices or deceptive design patterns using UI/UX (user interface/user experience) interactions on any platform; designed to 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 to misleading advertisement or unfair trade practice or violation of consumer rights.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 18 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, issued “Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023”. Central Consumer Protection Authority has identified 13 dark patterns that affects the consumer’s choice on e-commerce platforms. These 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.

CCPA has been keeping close watch on the dark pattern practices by companies. The CCPA has issued 42 notices against platforms practicing dark patterns. The central authority has initiated action against a platform for use of dark pattern feature auto renewal of Membership of ₹99 for 3 months, was added without consumer knowledge, which is a basket sneaking dark pattern. Dark pattern practices in the form of “Drip Pricing” where an increased price at check out and addition of a Handling Charge and the Pass Membership fee was added without consumer knowledge, that amounted to a basket sneaking practice was identified and action taken against the platform. In a Coaching institute Platform case, the Coaching institute was penalised having found to create false urgency accompanied by a 24-hour timer which was found to be false and is a dark pattern practice of false urgency. A prominent airline was engaging in dark pattern of ‘Confirm Shaming’ on the Airlines App and also there was lack of transparent Communication on Seat Assignment. The dark pattern feature was modified after CCPA order. After CCPA’s notice another online booking platform in entertainment space discontinued the dark pattern practice of basket sneaking, wherein Rs 1 was added for charity without consumer consent. Customers have now been given an option to choose whether or not they wish to contribute towards charity.

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” was issued by Central Consumer Protection Authority on 5th June,2025 .

All E-Commerce platforms have been advised through the said Advisory to take necessary steps to ensure that their platforms do not engage in such deceptive and unfair trade practices which are in the nature of Dark Patterns. Further, all E-Commerce platforms have been advised to conduct self-audits to identify dark patterns, within three months of the issue of the advisory and take necessary steps to ensure that their platforms are free from such dark patterns. Based on the self-audit reports, the E-Commerce platforms should also give self-declarations that their platform is not indulging in any dark patterns, in order to ensure fair digital ecosystem along with building trust between consumers and e-commerce platforms.

A Joint Working Group, comprising representatives from Ministries, National Law Universities and Voluntary Consumer Organizations, has been constituted vide Office Memorandum dated 5th June,2025 for identifying the dark patterns and stakeholders to work together in creating a transparent, ethical and user-centric online environment .

28 leading e-commerce platforms have voluntarily submitted their self-declaration letters confirming compliance with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023 and their names are enclosed as **Annexure**.

ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*117 FOR 10.02.2026 REGARDING USE OF DARK PATTERNS BY E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS ASKED BY SHRI A. A. RAHIM.

The platforms that have submitted declarations are:

- (i) Page Industries Private Limited (JOCKEY)
- (ii) WILLIAM PENN Private Limited
- (iii) Axelia Solutions Pvt. Ltd.("Pharmeasy")
- (iv) Zepto Marketplace Pvt. Ltd.(Zepto)
- (v) Curaden India Private Limited
- (vi) Duroflex Private Limited
- (vii) Flipkart Internet Private Limited
- (viii) Myntra Designs Private Limited
- (ix) Cleartrip Private Limited
- (x) Walmart India Private Limited
- (xi) Makemy Trip (India) Private Limited
- (xii) Big Basket (Innovative Retail Concepts Private Limited)
- (xiii) Tira Beauty (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xiv) Jio Mart (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xv) Reliance Jewels (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xvi) Ajio (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xvii) Reliance Digital (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xviii) Netmeds (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xix) Hamleys (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xx) MilBasket (Reliance Retail Limited)
- (xxi) Swiggy Limited
- (xxii) TATA 1 mg
- (xxiii) Zomato (Eternal Limited)
- (xxiv) Blinkit (Blink Commerce Private Limited)
- (xxv) Ixigo (Le Travenues Technology Limited)
- (xxvi) Meesho Ltd.
- (xxvii) CP Wholesale India Private Limited (Lots)
- (xxviii)Clues Network Pvt. Ltd. (Shop Clues)
