

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**  
**Department of Consumer Affairs**  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1819**  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2023**

**NATIONAL CONSUMER HELPLINE**

1819. SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI: SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT:

Will the Minister of **CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**  
**उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री** be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) as an alternative dispute redressal mechanism, with particular focus on the number of grievances addressed, languages supported and modes of complaint registration;
- (b) whether the Government has formulated any particular action plan to redress the day to day problems of consumers arising due to online shopping and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the technological advancements that have been incorporated into the Centralized Consumer Grievance Redressal System to improve its efficiency and responsiveness; and
- (d) the manner in which the Government has ensured that complaints are addressed in a timely and effective manner?

**ANSWER**

**उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण राज्य मंत्री**  
**(श्री अश्विनी कुमार चौबे)**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE**  
**CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**  
**(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a) & (c) : The Department has revamped, the National Consumer Helpline(NCH) which has emerged as a single point of access to consumers across the country for grievance redressal at 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- Whats App, SMS , mail , NCH app, web portal, Umang app as per their convenience.

This helpline works in a dedicated manner from 8 AM to 8 PM on all seven days of the week except national holidays. For this purpose, an exclusive call centre has been established and to facilitate increase of access to our consumers, call back facility is also available from 8 PM to 8 AM. Further, NCH has also partnered with prominent stakeholders, namely- private companies, regulators, ombudsman government agencies to bring them altogether on a single online IT platform where in all grievances are collated in a central repository with unique docket numbers. Currently 813 convergence partners are in collaboration with NCH to offer speedy resolution to consumer grievances.

Transformative changes and technological upgradation of the NCH has led to an increase in the call handling facility. Number of calls received at NCH has exponentially increased from 12,303 in November 2014 to 90,973 in November 2022 and was at 1,32,209 in November 2023. Initiatives taken by the Department have also encouraged consumers to register their grievances on the NCH which is manifested with an increase in the number of grievances registered at NCH.

The details of total number of grievances received on the National Consumer Helpline during the last three years may be seen below. All the grievances received at NCH have been disposed of.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total grievances</b>
FY-2022-23	10,05,985
FY-2021-22	7,44,625
FY-2020-21	6,74,820

(b): Government has also taken several initiatives recently to redress the problems faced by the consumers from unfair trade practices on online platform. Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has been established w.e.f. 24.07.2020 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 as a class.

Under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, E-Commerce Rules, 2020 have been notified by Central Govt. on 23.07.2020 for prevention of unfair trade practice in e-commerce.

As per the provisions of the E-Commerce Rules, 2020, every e-commerce entity shall provide, inter-alia, contact details like e-mail address, fax, landline and mobile numbers of customer care as well as of grievance officer in a clear and accessible manner on its platform, displayed prominently to its users.

Also, as per provision of the E-Commerce Rules, 2020, every e-commerce entity shall establish an adequate grievance redressal mechanism having regard to the number of grievances ordinarily received by such entity from India, and shall appoint a grievance officer for consumer grievance redressal, and shall display the name, contact details, and designation of such officer on its platform. It shall acknowledge the receipt of any consumer complaint within forty-eight hours of receipt and redresses the complaint within one month from the date of receipt.

The CCPA has 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.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority has also issued Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023 recently on 30th November, 2023 for prevention and regulation of dark patterns.

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.

(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 Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides for redressal of the grievances of consumer through specialized three-tier quasi-judicial agencies, now commonly known as 'National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (NCDRC)' at National level, 'State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDRC)' at State level, and 'District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission(DCDRC)' at District level.

The Act also provides for, inter-alia, simplification of the adjudication process in the Consumer Commissions; filing of a complaint by a consumer in the Consumer Commission having jurisdiction with respect to his place of work/residence irrespective of place of transaction and place of business or residence of the opposite parties, e-filing and e-payment, video conferencing for hearing, deemed admissibility of complaints if admissibility is not decided within 21 days of filing; court monitored mediation to facilitate early disposal of cases; provision of product liability.

Provision for filing cases online through e-Daakhil has been introduced in NCDRC and Consumer Commissions of 35 States/UTs at the district and state level for speedy and hassle-free resolution of cases.

Section 38(7) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 prescribes that every complaint shall be disposed of as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to decide the complaint within a period of three months from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities and within five months if it requires analysis or testing of commodities.

Department of Consumer Affairs has notified 17 Rules and 6 Regulations under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 for the protection of rights and interests of consumers which, inter-alia, includes E-Commerce Rules, Direct Selling) Rules, Mediation Rules, Search and Seizure and Compounding of offences by the Central Authority and Crediting of Penalty Rules etc.

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