

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1659  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.07.2025**

**UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES**

1659. DR. SAMBIT PATRA:  
(OIH)

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

- (a) whether the Government has received complaints from individuals using Android phones and iPhones regarding the charging of differential rates for the same service and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether similar complaints have also been received against food delivery apps, online travel booking apps, movie booking apps, etc. and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the present Consumer Protection Act comprises adequate provisions to prevent such unfair trade practices;
- (d) whether the Government is likely to consider any amendment in the Consumer Protection Act to deal with such unfair trade practices; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

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 Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was enacted.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

In terms of the provisions of these rules, no e-commerce entity shall:

- a) Manipulate the price of the goods or services offered on its platform in such a manner as to gain unreasonable profit by imposing on consumers any unjustified price having regard to the prevailing market conditions, the essential nature of the good or service, any extraordinary circumstances under which the good or service is offered, and any other relevant consideration in determining whether the price charged is justified.

- b) Discriminate between the consumers of the same class or make any arbitrary classification of consumers affecting their rights under the Act.

These rules also provide that no e-commerce entity shall adopt any unfair trade practice, whether in the course of business on its platform or otherwise.

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. CCPA, under Section 19 of the Consumer Protection Act, is empowered to, upon receiving any information, complaint under Section 17 or directions from the Central Government, or on its own motion, conduct or cause to be conducted a preliminary inquiry to determine whether there exists a prima facie case of violation of consumer rights, unfair trade practices or false or misleading advertisements by any person, which is prejudicial to the public interest or the interests of consumers. If satisfied that such a prima facie case exists, the CCPA shall direct an investigation to be carried out by the Director-General or the District Collector.

In order to strengthen consumer protection, the CCPA issued the “Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023” on 30th November 2023. These guidelines address and regulate 13 specific dark patterns identified in the e-commerce sector, aiming to prevent deceptive practices that mislead consumers. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) introduced the framework on ‘Online Consumer Reviews — Principles and Requirements for their Collection, Moderation and Publication’ on 23rd November 2022. This framework safeguards consumer interests by addressing fake and deceptive reviews in e-commerce. While the standards are voluntary, they apply to all online platforms that publish consumer reviews and are guided by principles such as integrity, accuracy, privacy, security, transparency, accessibility and responsiveness.

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