

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

LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. *361

TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.03.2026

PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS IN E-COMMERCE

*361. SHRI N K PREMACHANDRAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government has initiated any action to protect the rights of consumers in e-commerce and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has initiated any action to protect the rights of consumers from delivery of damaged, duplicate, low quality and counterfeit branded items and if so, the details of action taken thereon;
- (c) whether the Government has initiated any action to monitor the efficiency of toll free numbers and if so, the details of action taken thereon;
- (d) whether the Government has initiated any action to ensure that the toll free numbers provided by various companies are providing service to the consumers in a time bound manner and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to ensure that the toll free numbers is given for complaint registration with timeframe to ensure service within the reasonable time and if so, the details of action taken thereon?

ANSWER

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*361 FOR 18.03.2026 REGARDING PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS IN E-COMMERCE:

Department of Consumer Affairs is continuously working for protection and empowerment of consumers by enactment of progressive legislations. With a view to modernize the framework governing consumer protection in the era of globalization, technologies, e-commerce markets etc., the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 was enacted.

Salient features of the 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; provision for making rules for prevention of unfair trade practice in e-commerce and direct selling.

The National Consumer Helpline (NCH) administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs has emerged as a single point of access to consumers across the country for their grievance redressal at a pre-litigation stage for violation of rights of consumers, misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices. Consumers can register their grievances from all over the country in 17 languages including Hindi, English, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Nepali, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Maithili, Santhali, Bengali, Odia, Assamese and Manipuri 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- WhatsApp (8800001915), SMS (8800001915), email (nch-ca@gov.in), the NCH app, the web portal (consumerhelpline.gov.in) and the Umang app, as per their convenience. 1,398 companies, who have voluntarily partnered with NCH as part of the 'Convergence' programme directly respond to these grievances according to their redressal process and revert by providing a feedback to the complainant on the portal.

The technological transformation of the NCH has significantly boosted its call-handling capacity. The number of calls received by NCH has grown from 62,172 calls in December 2019 to 3,59,336 calls in December 2025. This growth reflects the rising confidence of consumers in the helpline. Similarly, the average number of complaints registered per month has surged from 37,062 in 2017 to 1,47,635 in 2025. Additionally, grievance registration via WhatsApp has gained momentum, with the percentage of complaints filed through the platform increasing from 12% in December 2023 to 21% in December 2025 demonstrating a growing preference for digital communication channels.

In a significant move to further enhance grievance redressal, NCH has introduced AI-based Speech Recognition, a Translation System, and an AI enabled Chatbot as part of the NCH 2.0 initiative. These technological advancements aim to make the grievance filing process more seamless, efficient, and inclusive. The AI-powered Speech Recognition and Translation System enables consumers to file complaints through voice input, reducing manual intervention. The AI enabled Chatbot provides real-time assistance, streamlining complaint-handling processes, and improving the overall user experience. These upgrades ensure that consumers from diverse linguistic backgrounds have equal access to the grievance redressal system at no cost.

National Consumer Helpline has put in place a mechanism to address all the grievances received on the Helpline portal which is hassle free, inexpensive and without intermediaries. The average grievance disposal time for grievances received through CPGRAMS in 2025 was 13 days, compared to 18 days in 2024.

The National Consumer Helpline (NCH) has successfully facilitated refund of ₹52 crore to consumers between 25th April 2025 and 31st January 2026. This significant redressal at a pre-litigation stage was achieved across 31 sectors (including 36.80 Crores with regard to the grievances pertaining to e-commerce sector), effectively addressing 79,521 consumer grievances related to refund claims.

During the last three years, the grievances registered on National Consumer Helpline (NCH) in e-commerce sector are as follows:

S. No.	Year	Registered
1	2023	4,46,133
2	2024	4,40,187
3	2025	5,11,196

NCH has put in place a mechanism to address all the grievances received on the helpline portal.

The Department has notified the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 on 23 July 2020 under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 to safeguard consumers from unfair trade practices in the e-commerce sector. These Rules specify the duties of e-commerce entities, liabilities of marketplace entities, responsibilities of sellers on marketplaces and duties of inventory-based e-commerce entities.

Under these Rules, e-commerce entities are required to appoint a Grievance Officer and prominently display the name, designation and contact details of the officer on their platform. The grievance officer must acknowledge consumer complaints within 48 hours and redress them within one month from the date of receipt of the complaint. E-commerce entities are also required to endeavour to become partners in the convergence process of the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) and are prohibited from discriminating between consumers of the same class or manipulating prices to gain unreasonable profits.

Marketplace e-commerce entities are required to obtain undertakings from sellers ensuring that product descriptions, images and other content correspond accurately with the appearance, nature, quality and features of the goods or services. They must prominently publish details of sellers including business name, geographic address, customer care contact details, ratings and feedback along with complete information regarding return, refund, exchange, warranty, delivery, payment modes and grievance redressal mechanisms. Sellers are also required to ensure that advertisements are consistent with the actual characteristics and usage conditions of goods or services and are prohibited from posting misleading reviews or misrepresenting product features.

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 violation of rights of consumers, misleading advertisements, unfair trade practices etc. and to initiate class action(s), including the enforcement of recalls, refunds and return of products. As on 09.03.2026, CCPA has issued 477 notices of class action, imposed penalties amounting to ₹3,00,40,500, and closed 177 cases with receipt of penalties of ₹1,56,10,500.

CCPA has taken action against several entities for violation of consumer rights and unfair trade practices in the e-commerce sector. Such actions include withdrawal of misleading advertisements relating to certain low-quality products marketed through online platforms, recall of products being sold in violation of mandatory quality standards and Quality Control Orders. Penal action has also been taken against entities for sale of products bearing spurious certification marks and misleading claims.

CCPA has taken action against the sale of domestic pressure cookers that do not meet compulsory BIS standards on e-commerce platforms. CCPA, for safeguarding consumer interests and their safety, issued directions to e-commerce platforms and their sellers to recall total 5507 non-ISI mark domestic pressure cookers sold by them. CCPA also directed sellers of e-commerce platforms to recall 818 toys and also imposed penalties for the toys which were being sold on e-commerce platforms in violation to mandatory standards and QCO notified for toys.

Based on grievances received through the National Consumer Helpline, CCPA has examined instances where grievance redressal mechanisms including customer care numbers or details of grievance officers were not prominently displayed by certain entities. Appropriate action has been taken and corrective measures implemented by such entities to strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms and ensure availability of contact details for consumers.

Subsequent to action taken by CCPA, several e-commerce entities and direct selling companies further strengthened their grievance redressal mechanism such as giving names of the grievance officers, nodal officers, contact details etc.

In addition, CCPA has issued Safety Notices under Section 18(2)(j) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 cautioning consumers against purchase of goods not conforming to mandatory safety standards which includes helmets, pressure cookers, cooking gas cylinders and certain household electrical appliances.

CCPA has issued an advisory dated 30th September, 2021 in terms of the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 regarding display of information provided by sellers on marketplace e-commerce platforms. The advisory, inter-alia, provides for ensuring that marketplace e-commerce entities display in a clear and accessible manner all relevant information furnished by sellers on their platforms, including details of the seller and grievance officer, so as to safeguard consumer interests and facilitate effective grievance redressal for consumers purchasing goods or services through e-commerce.

CCPA issued an advisory dated 14.07.2022 to e-commerce platforms regarding the online sale of certain Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani medicines that contain ingredients listed in Schedule E(1) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 which may include potentially hazardous substances and therefore must be consumed only under medical supervision. Accordingly, e-commerce platforms have been advised to ensure that such drugs are sold only after a valid prescription from a registered Ayurveda, Siddha or Unani practitioner is uploaded by the consumer on the platform to prevent unsafe self-medication and protect consumers from potential health risks associated with unsupervised use of such medicines.

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 conditions for an advertisement to be non-misleading and valid; duties of manufacturer, service provider, advertiser and advertising agency including on e-commerce platforms.

Central Consumer Protection Authority, 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” on 30th November, 2023, 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.

An “Advisory for 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 also issued by the CCPA on 5th June, 2025. 29 leading e-commerce platforms have voluntarily submitted their self-declaration letters confirming compliance with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.

CCPA has also notified Guidelines for the Prevention and Regulation of Illegal Listing and Sale of Radio Equipment including Walkie Talkies on E-Commerce Platforms, 2025. These guidelines have been notified to curb the unauthorized sale of wireless devices operating beyond the 446.0–446.2 MHz frequency band that may pose risks to consumer safety, mislead consumers regarding their legal position and interfere with critical communication networks, including those used by law enforcement and emergency services. Further, the CCPA action follows the identification of over 16,970 non-compliant walkie-talkie listings across platforms and also imposed penalties of ₹10 lakh each on Meesho, Flipkart, Amazon and Meta Platforms Inc, and ₹1 lakh each on Chimiya, JioMart, Talk Pro and MaskMan Toys.

CCPA has taken action against the sale of counterfeit and substandard goods on a major e-commerce platform for promotion and sale of counterfeit and spurious goods including medicines, cosmetics, beauty products and clothing items, misleading display of MRPs and discounts on branded products, use of misleading labels alongside spurious listings and facilitation of sale of Schedule-H drugs without prescription. The platform was directed to strengthen its due-diligence and monitoring mechanisms. As a result of these regulatory interventions, the platform instituted enhanced internal detection and filtering systems and reported large-scale removal of counterfeit listings from its platform. The company informed that between 04 August 2022 and 05 June 2025, a total of 1,21,31,880 product listings identified as counterfeit were delisted out of 40,19,27,610 listings uploaded, including 69,63,556 counterfeit listings removed during April 2023–September 2024 and 12,35,469 listings removed during September 2024–May 2025.

From 2020 till date, 997 notices have been issued by Legal Metrology, for violations of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011, regarding non declaration of mandatory information such as country of origin, MRP, net quantity etc. resulting in compounding of Rs. 1.03 Crore under Section 48 of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009. These notices also include sale of unverified weighing scales/instruments on e-commerce platforms.

Aligned with global best practices, “Safety Pledge” has been finalized, in consultation with all the stakeholders, which is a voluntary public commitment of e-Commerce platforms to ensure the safety of goods sold online. This initiative strengthens consumer protection in the e-commerce. Various e-Commerce companies viz. Tata Digital, Tata 1mg, BigBasket, Tata Cliq, Chroma, Swiggy, Ola, Zomato, Ajo, JioMart, Netmeds, Meesho etc. have signed the Safety Pledge for ensuring consumer safety.

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.

To protect the rights of consumers, the Central Government has mandated BIS certification for 635 products. Such products cannot be manufactured, sold, imported, stored or exhibited for sale without a valid BIS certification. Certification is granted after testing the conformity of products with the relevant Indian Standards. During the past two years, BIS has tested 209 samples purchased from e-commerce platforms to verify their conformity with the relevant Indian Standards. Out of these, 144 samples were found conforming to the Indian Standards.

During the past two years, BIS has conducted 79 search and seizure operations at the premises of e-commerce warehouses, sellers operating on e-commerce platforms viz. Amazon, BigBasket, Blinkit, Flipkart, Meesho and Myntra. These operations have been carried out across various States including Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
