Central Consumer Protection Authority issues advisory to E-Commerce Platforms for self-audit within 3 months to detect Dark Patterns and ensure its resolution

Joint Working Group (JWG) constituted to identify and eradicate Dark Patterns

E-Commerce Platforms advised to comply with Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023

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The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued advisory to all e-commerce platforms to take necessary steps to ensure that their platforms do not engage in deceptive and unfair trade practice which are in the nature of Dark Patterns.

All e-commerce platforms have been **advised to conduct self-audits** to identify dark patterns**, within 3 months of the issue of the advisory,** and take necessary steps to ensure that their platforms are free from such dark patterns. The e commerce platforms, based on the self-audit reports, have also encouraged to give self-declarations that their platform is not indulging in any dark patterns. The self-declarations by the platforms will enable fair digital ecosystem along with building trust between consumers and e-commerce platforms.

CCPA has also issued notices to e-commerce platforms in some cases that have been found violating the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns. All e-commerce platforms are therefore, **advised to refrain from deploying deceptive design interfaces** that mislead consumers or manipulate their decision-making. The Authority has been keeping a close watch on the violation of the Guidelines issued for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns. Instances of Dark Patterns have been noticed on E-Commerce platforms.

The Department of Consumers Affairs, Government of India **constituted a Joint Working Group (JWG**) comprises of representatives from concerned Ministries, regulators, Voluntary Consumer Organisations and NLUs. The mandate of this JWG is examine and undertake measures to identify

violations of Dark Patterns on e-commerce platforms and share the information with the Department of Consumer Affairs on regular intervals. The JWG shall also suggest appropriate awareness programmes for creating awareness amongst the consumers.

As part of the Government's broader strategy and ongoing efforts to strengthen consumer protection in the digital era and curb unfair practices in e-commerce and online services, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India had notified the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns in 2023 and specified 13 dark patterns, namely: False urgency, Basket Sneaking, Confirm shaming, forced action, Subscription trap, Interface Interference, Bait and switch, Drip Pricing, Disguised Advertisements and Nagging, Trick Wording, Saas Billing and Rogue Malwares.

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