

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2441
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.12.2024

PREVENTION OF MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENT IN COACHING SECTOR

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

- (a) whether Government has issued any guidelines for “Prevention of Misleading Advertisement in Coaching Sector”;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the legislative actions which have been taken by Government to enable punishment for violations under the Consumer Protection Act; and
- (d) the measures adopted by Government to safeguard students and the public from deceptive marketing practices across the country?

ANSWER

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

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 Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was repealed and Consumer Protection Act 2019 was enacted.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has been established under Section-10 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 to regulate the matters related to violation of rights of consumers, unfair trade practices and false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the interest of public and consumers to promote, protect and enforce the rights of the consumers as a class.

On 13th November, 2024, CCPA has issued “Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisement in Coaching Sector, 2024” in order to prevent coaching centers from making false or misleading claims/advertisements to promote the sale of goods or service and engage in deceptive or unfair practices.

In order to protect consumer interest, CCPA has issued 45 notices to various coaching centers for misleading advertisement. The CCPA has imposed a penalty of Rs 61,60,000 on 19 coaching institutes and directed them to discontinue the misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices.

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. 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- WhatsApp, SMS , mail , NCH app, web portal, Umang app as per their convenience. 1004 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. Complaints against those companies, who have not partnered with National Consumer Helpline, are forwarded to the company's email id for redressal.

Department of Consumer Affairs through the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) has successfully intervened at a pre-litigation stage to ensure justice for students and aspirants who enrolled for the UPSC Civil Services, IIT and other entrance examinations. Following numerous complaints registered in the National Consumer Helpline regarding unfair practices by various coaching centers especially not refunding the enrolment fees of the students/ aspirants, NCH initiated a drive to resolve these grievances on a mission-mode to facilitate a total refund of ₹ 1.15 cr. to affected students.
