



# CCPA Issues Guidelines Safeguarding Against Dark Patterns

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## Why in News?

The [Central Consumer Protection Authority \(CCPA\)](#), India's top consumer watchdog, has recently notified guidelines for **prevention and regulation of [Dark Patterns](#), 2023**.

- These guidelines, issued under the [Consumer Protection Act, 2019](#), are designed to protect consumers from deceptive practices employed by online platforms.

## What are Dark Patterns?

- Dark patterns, also known as deceptive patterns, refer to **strategies employed by websites and apps to make users perform actions** they did not intend to or discourage behaviors that are not advantageous for the companies.
- These patterns often exploit [cognitive biases](#) and employ tactics such as false urgency, forced actions, hidden costs etc.

## What are the Key Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns?

- The guidelines prohibit the use of [dark patterns](#) to mislead or coerce users.
- The guidelines also urge entities to retain users and drive sales using ethical and consumer-centric approaches.
- These guidelines regarding the **dark patterns** extend their applicability to all platforms offering goods and services in India, encompassing advertisers and sellers.
  - E-commerce players, websites, and apps are subject to the regulatory framework established by these guidelines.
- The CCPA has outlined 13 types of dark patterns in its notification. They are:
  - **False Urgency:** Creating a false sense of urgency or scarcity to induce immediate purchases.
  - **Basket Sneaking:** Inclusion of additional items at checkout without user consent, resulting in higher payments.
  - **Confirm Shaming:** Using fear or shame to nudge users into specific actions for commercial gains.
  - **Forced Action:** Compelling users to take actions requiring additional purchases or sharing personal information.
  - **Subscription Trap:** Making cancellation complex, hiding options, or forcing payment details for free subscriptions.
  - **Interface Interference:** Manipulating the user interface to misdirect users from intended actions.
  - **Bait and Switch:** Deceptively serving an alternate outcome than advertised based on user

- actions.
- **Drip Pricing:** Concealing prices upfront, revealing them post-confirmation, or preventing service use unless additional items are purchased.
  - **Disguised Advertisement:** Posing advertisements as other content to trick users into clicking.
  - **Nagging:** Persistent interactions disrupting and annoying users for commercial gains.
  - **Trick Question:** Deliberate use of confusing language to misguide users.
  - **SaaS Billing:** Generating recurring payments in a software as a service (SaaS) model.
  - **Rogue Malwares:** Using ransomware or scareware to mislead users into paying for fake malware removal tools.

## What is the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)?

- CCPA established under the [Consumer Protection Act of 2019](#), safeguards and defends consumers' rights, issuing guidelines for effective enforcement and enhancement of consumer rights.
- The objective of the CCPA is to **promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.**
- It will be empowered to conduct investigations into violation of consumer rights and institute complaints / prosecution, order recall of unsafe goods and services, order discontinuation of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements, impose penalties on manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading advertisements.

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