

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

LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. *186

TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.03.2025

FARE DISPARITY BY CAB COMPANIES

*186. SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:
SHRI CHAVAN RAVINDRA VASANTRAO:

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

- (a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government about price disparity being followed by various cab companies especially Uber and Ola depending upon the customer using iPhone or Android phone and if so, the details and the facts thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has received any complaints from the consumers against certain cab companies for charging different amount of fare for same travel distance despite having same pick up point, estimate time of arrival and drop off time and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has issued any directives/notice to the cab companies to fix/provide the criteria for deciding the fare in view of its zero tolerance towards unfair trade practice;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the response received from the cab companies in this regard; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken any punitive action also against the cab companies in such wrong doings and if so, the details thereof?

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.*186 FOR 12.03.2025 REGARDING FARE DISPARITY BY CAB COMPANIES.

Yes Sir. It has come to the notice of the Department of Consumer Affairs about alleged price disparity being followed by ANI Technologies Private Limited (Ola) and Uber India Systems Private Limited (Uber) for cab fares displayed on Android and iOS devices for identical rides. Accordingly, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued a letter on 10.1.2025 seeking response from Ola and Uber regarding alleged differential pricing. Ola and Uber have denied the charges. Since both the companies have denied the charges, the matter has been sent to DG (Investigation) for detailed Investigation.

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, ecommerce 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 consumer 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. Its core mandate is to prevent and regulate false or misleading advertisements which are prejudicial to the public interest.

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 ecommerce. 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.
