Polity & Governance · GS - II

Digital platforms increasingly influence consumer choices through interface design, default settings and algorithmic recommendations. Examine the role of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 in addressing such emerging forms of unfair trade practices.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 13/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Digital consumer markets, Consumer Protection Act 2019, CCPA, unfair trade practices, dark patterns, consumer autonomy, information asymmetry, algorithmic manipulation, grievance redressal, platform accountability.

Model Answer

Introduction

The expansion of digital platforms has transformed consumer markets but also created new risks through manipulative interface designs, misleading prompts and information asymmetry. Consumer protection must therefore extend beyond traditional marketplace practices.

Regulatory Framework

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 established the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to protect consumer rights and address unfair trade practices. It empowers the authority to investigate violations, order discontinuation of unfair practices and impose penalties for misleading advertisements. The 2023 guidelines on dark patterns further address deceptive digital interface practices.

Emerging Challenges

Pre-selected options, disguised advertisements, misleading urgency and manipulative tipping prompts can influence consumer decisions without meaningful informed consent. Such practices undermine consumer autonomy and transparency. Cross-border platforms and complex algorithms also make accountability difficult.

Way Forward

Platforms should ensure transparent pricing, informed consent, accessible grievance redressal and fair interface design. Strong enforcement, consumer awareness and periodic regulatory review are essential.

Conclusion

Effective digital consumer protection requires balancing innovation with transparency, accountability and the fundamental right of consumers to make informed choices.

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