

# Role of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) in Controlling Misleading Advertisements

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## Abstract

Advertisements play a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions in modern markets. With the rapid expansion of digital media, social networking platforms, and e-commerce marketplaces, advertisements have become more persuasive and widespread. However, the increasing prevalence of misleading advertisements has raised serious concerns regarding consumer protection. Misleading advertisements often exaggerate product features, conceal important information, or present false claims that mislead consumers and influence their buying decisions. To address these challenges, the Government of India introduced the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which established the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** to regulate unfair trade practices and protect consumer rights. The CCPA has been empowered to investigate misleading advertisements, impose penalties on manufacturers and endorsers, and issue directions to discontinue deceptive promotional practices. This study examines the role of the CCPA in controlling misleading advertisements and safeguarding consumer interests in India. The research adopts a doctrinal and analytical approach based on secondary data sources including statutory provisions, regulatory guidelines, academic literature, and official reports. The study analyses the powers and functions of the CCPA and evaluates the effectiveness of its regulatory interventions in preventing misleading advertising practices. The findings indicate that the establishment of the CCPA represents a significant step toward strengthening consumer protection; however, challenges remain in terms of enforcement, monitoring of digital advertisements, and consumer awareness. The study concludes that stronger regulatory monitoring, stricter compliance mechanisms, and consumer education are essential for ensuring truthful and transparent advertising practices.

## Keywords

Central Consumer Protection Authority; Misleading Advertisements; Consumer Protection Act, 2019; Consumer Rights; Unfair Trade Practices; Advertising Regulation; Consumer Protection.

## Introduction

Advertising has become an essential component of modern marketing strategies, enabling businesses to promote products and services to a wide audience. Through various media platforms such as television, print media, social media, and digital advertising, companies attempt to influence consumer purchasing decisions by highlighting the benefits and features of their products. In recent years, the growth of online marketing and social media platforms has significantly increased the reach and impact of advertisements.

While advertisements play an important role in informing consumers about products and services, they may also mislead consumers if they contain false or exaggerated claims. Misleading advertisements may create unrealistic expectations regarding product performance, conceal important information about risks or limitations, or falsely claim endorsements from experts or celebrities. Such practices can distort consumer decision-making and result in financial losses or dissatisfaction among consumers.

To address these concerns, India introduced the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which strengthened the legal framework for consumer protection. One of the significant features of this legislation is the establishment of the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)**. The authority has been granted powers to regulate unfair trade practices, investigate violations of consumer rights, and take action against misleading advertisements.

The CCPA plays a crucial role in ensuring that advertisements provide accurate and truthful information to consumers. It has the authority to impose penalties on manufacturers, advertisers, and endorsers who promote misleading advertisements. The authority can also order the discontinuation or modification of advertisements that are found to be deceptive or harmful to consumers.

In this context, the present study examines the role of the Central Consumer Protection Authority in controlling misleading advertisements in India and evaluates its effectiveness in protecting consumer interests in the evolving advertising landscape.

### Statement of the Problem

Advertisements are one of the most influential tools used by businesses to promote products and services. However, the increasing competition in the marketplace has led some businesses to adopt misleading advertising practices in order to attract consumers. These advertisements may exaggerate product benefits, provide incomplete information, or make false claims regarding quality, safety, or effectiveness.

Consumers often rely on advertisements as a source of information when making purchasing decisions. When advertisements contain misleading information, consumers may purchase products based on incorrect assumptions or unrealistic expectations. This may result in financial losses, dissatisfaction, and erosion of consumer trust in the marketplace.

The emergence of digital advertising and influencer marketing has further complicated the issue of misleading advertisements. Online advertisements may reach a large audience within a short period, making it difficult for regulatory authorities to monitor and control deceptive practices effectively.

Although the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 established the Central Consumer Protection Authority to regulate unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements, the effectiveness of its interventions in controlling deceptive advertising practices requires careful examination. Therefore, this study seeks to analyse the role of the CCPA in regulating misleading advertisements and protecting consumer rights in India.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the concept and impact of misleading advertisements on consumer decision-making.
2. To analyse the powers and functions of the Central Consumer Protection Authority in regulating misleading advertisements.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory measures implemented by the CCPA in protecting consumer rights.

### Research Methodology

The present study adopts a **doctrinal and analytical research methodology** to examine the role of the Central Consumer Protection Authority in controlling misleading advertisements. The research relies primarily on **secondary data sources**, including statutory provisions, regulatory guidelines, academic journals, books, government reports, and research articles related to consumer protection and advertising regulation.

The provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 have been examined to understand the legal framework governing misleading advertisements in India. In addition, policy documents and official publications issued by government authorities have been reviewed to analyse the regulatory role of the CCPA.

The collected data has been analysed using descriptive and analytical methods to assess the effectiveness of regulatory measures implemented to control misleading advertisements and protect consumer interests.

## Analysis and Interpretation

Misleading advertisements have become a significant concern in the modern marketplace, particularly with the rapid expansion of digital marketing and social media advertising. Businesses often use persuasive techniques to attract consumer attention; however, when such techniques involve exaggeration or false claims, they may mislead consumers and distort purchasing decisions.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides a legal framework to address misleading advertisements by defining them as advertisements that falsely describe a product or service or give a false impression regarding its characteristics or benefits. Under the Act, the Central Consumer Protection Authority has been empowered to investigate complaints related to misleading advertisements and take appropriate action against violators.

The CCPA has the authority to impose penalties on manufacturers, advertisers, and endorsers who promote misleading advertisements. In certain cases, endorsers may also be prohibited from promoting products for a specified period if they are found to have endorsed misleading advertisements without adequate verification.

The authority may also issue directions to discontinue or modify advertisements that are found to be deceptive or harmful to consumers. These powers enable the CCPA to regulate advertising practices and ensure that consumers receive accurate and truthful information.

However, the increasing use of digital marketing techniques and influencer endorsements presents new challenges for regulatory authorities. Monitoring advertisements across multiple online platforms requires advanced technological tools and continuous regulatory oversight.

The analysis indicates that while the CCPA plays an important role in controlling misleading advertisements, effective implementation requires cooperation between regulators, businesses, and consumers.

## Findings

1. Misleading advertisements significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions and may result in financial losses or dissatisfaction.
2. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides a comprehensive legal framework to regulate misleading advertisements.
3. The establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority has strengthened regulatory oversight in consumer protection.
4. The CCPA has the power to investigate misleading advertisements and impose penalties on violators.
5. The rapid growth of digital advertising and influencer marketing creates new challenges for monitoring deceptive advertising practices.

## Suggestions

### 1. Strengthening Monitoring Mechanisms

Regulatory authorities should adopt advanced technological tools to monitor digital advertisements across multiple platforms.

## 2. **Enhancing Consumer Awareness**

Consumer awareness programs should educate individuals about identifying misleading advertisements.

## 3. **Promoting Ethical Advertising Practices**

Businesses should follow ethical advertising standards and ensure transparency in promotional activities.

## 4. **Regulating Influencer Marketing**

Clear guidelines should be established for social media influencers to ensure responsible product endorsements.

## 5. **Encouraging Consumer Participation**

Consumers should be encouraged to report misleading advertisements through accessible grievance redressal platforms.

## Conclusion

Misleading advertisements pose a serious threat to consumer rights by distorting information and influencing purchasing decisions. In the digital age, where advertisements reach consumers through multiple media platforms, ensuring truthful and transparent advertising practices has become increasingly important.

The establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 represents a significant step toward strengthening consumer protection in India. By empowering the authority to investigate and penalize misleading advertisements, the legal framework seeks to ensure fairness and accountability in the marketplace.

However, the rapidly evolving advertising environment requires continuous regulatory vigilance, technological monitoring, and greater consumer awareness. Strengthening regulatory enforcement and promoting ethical advertising practices will play a crucial role in safeguarding consumer interests and maintaining trust in the marketplace.

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