



CAG

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

Keeping safe when accessing online financial services (A consumer guidance seminar)

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Press release

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The internet has transformed how financial services work. It has brought in ease and convenience at levels we have never known before. But along with this have come the scams - clever, complicated schemes that either steal our identity and then our money or get us to willingly part with our money, and personal details. No one is exempt from this; but particularly vulnerable are the senior citizens and semi-literate population who have been forced to come to terms with a cashless society. The consumer guidance seminar on safe financial services organized by Citizen consumer civic Action Group, together with FEDCOT brought together experts to speak directly to consumers on staying safe online.

'A nation like India that is committed to creating successful and extensive digital ecosystems that revolutionize our economy cannot afford to have large segments of its population apprehensive of using digital services. When financially fragile individuals are burnt even once by these scams, they don't want to try accessing digital services ever again' said Anubhuti Singh, Dvara Research narrating the story of a small-time vendor who had lost money to a scammer. 'We need to keep these human touch points in mind when developing policies'.

Mr. Vinodh Rajkumar from the RBI elaborated on the different payment methods, explaining how systems like the UPI is one of the biggest networks in the world. 'They are meant to make our lives easier and the RBI goes to great lengths to ensure that the systems it regulates are safe to use. However, we need vigilant consumers' he said. 'We have redressal mechanisms in place, but these will not apply if the customer has shared his PIN or OTP'.

Mr Yogesh Sapkale, Moneylife Foundation explained the KYC process and the grievance redressal process in detail. He warned against posting personal information on social media as 'scammers can easily glean information from this that we had never intended to share'. The lively discussion that followed was an opportunity for participants to ask questions both from their personal experiences but also about existing policies.

The seminar was especially timely considering that a recent study by CAG found that nearly half of the users audited (who use digital financial services) are unaware that using third parties for online banking transactions are risky. The event was conducted to mark World Consumer Rights Day 2022 with the theme of 'Fair Digital Finance'. 'Apart from the convenience they bring to our lives, digital financial services can also be extremely empowering. But for this to really be a boon to the public, we need a combination of secure systems, redressal policies and a vigilant

public,' said Savitha, Researcher, Researcher,CAG.

For further information, contact: Savitha T. savitha.thirunavukkarasu@cag.org.in | 9884122398

About CAG

Citizen consumer & civic Action Group (CAG) is a thirty six year old nonprofit and non-political organization working on citizen rights and good governance. It has worked primarily to protect the interests of consumers and citizens of Chennai even as its efforts have had state level and even national level impacts.