

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1214
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 27.07.2018

MALICIOUS CONTENT CIRCULATED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

1214. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether despite the enactment of the IT Act, 2000, mis-information and malicious content is being openly circulated on social media on a daily basis;
- (b) whether Government has any additional plan/policy to counter this spread of false information, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government is aware that many anti-social elements, posting malicious content on social media, have been misusing photographs of many Central Ministers and senior leaders to assert their legitimacy for violating the IT Act, 2000, if so, the details of action taken by Government against them?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (c): Social media has emerged as a popular online medium/ platform to enable users to share ideas and express views/opinions on specific topics. Such platform can be accessed by all sections of society. However, there are some miscreants who are misusing this medium by using photographs of many Central Ministers and senior leaders to assert their legitimacy. Such behavior is facilitated by virtual and borderless nature of cyber space, where anyone can open account in any name including fake name from any part of the world.

The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions for removal of objectionable online content. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules, 2011 notified under section 79 of the IT Act requires that the intermediaries, which includes social media, shall observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform the users of computer resources not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is grossly harmful, defamatory, hateful, libellous, objectionable, affect minors and unlawful in any way. These intermediaries also need to follow Article 19(2) of the Constitution and ensure that their platforms are not used to commit and provoke extremism, violence and crime.

Further, section 69A of the IT Act empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of - (i) sovereignty and integrity of India, (ii) defence of India, (iii) security of the State, (iv) friendly relations with foreign States, (v) public order, or (vi) for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above.

Government is fully committed to freedom of speech and expression and privacy of its citizens as enshrined in the constitution of India. Government does not regulate content appearing on social media sites, Law enforcement agencies take action on posting of malicious content on specific case-to-case basis.
