

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1051
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.2.2023

MONITORING AND TRACKING OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

1051. SHRI SHAKTISINH GOHIL:

Will the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry tracks and monitors apps designed to manipulate social media platforms with the intent to spread hate speech and misinformation; and
(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a) and (b): No Sir. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology does not track or monitors apps, however, policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring an Open, Safe and Trusted and Accountable Internet for its users. Government is aware of the risk and danger posed by use of social media platforms to promote enmity between different groups or misinformation using social media intermediaries.

To help achieve the said aim, the Central Government, in exercise of powers conferred by the Information Technology Act, 2000, has made the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. These rules cast specific obligations on intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, to observe due diligence while discharging its duties. In case of failure to follow diligence as provided in the rules, an intermediary, they are not exempt from liability for any third-party information, data or communication link made available by them and are liable for the same as per law. Such diligence includes the following:

- (i) The intermediary shall make reasonable efforts to cause their users not to host, display, upload, publish, transmit or store information which is racially or ethnically objectionable, or promotes enmity between different groups on the grounds of religion or caste with the intent to incite violence, or knowingly and intentionally communicates any misinformation, or information which is patently false and untrue or misleading in nature, or which violates any law.
- (ii) The intermediary shall remove or disable access to any information prohibited under any law, as early as possible but not later than 36 hours of receiving actual knowledge of the same through a court order or on being notified by the Appropriate Government or its authorised agency.
- (iii) The intermediary shall, as soon as possible but not later than 72 hours of receipt of an order, provide information under its control or possession, or assistance to the Government agency lawfully authorised for investigative or protective activities for the purpose of verification of identity or prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of offences under any law.
- (iv) The intermediary shall act upon a complaint made to its Grievance Officer against violation of the above provisions, which is in the nature of a request for removal of information or communication link relating to information referred to in clause (i) above, as expeditiously as possible and shall resolve it within 72 hours of reporting.
