GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1935
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12TH DECEMBER, 2024

SPAM AND PESKY CALLS

1935   SHRI YERRAM VENKATA SUBBA REDDY:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a)   to what extent spam and pesky calls are leading to cyber frauds and phishing attacks;

(b)   the details of new programmes being initiated by Department of Telecommunications, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India and mobile service providers to counter spam and pesky calls;

(c)   whether AI, block chain, etc., is used to deal with above and, if so, the details thereof; and

(d)   to what extent Sanchaar Sathi is helping to deal with (a) and (b) above?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)

(a) to (c)   Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has developed Sanchar Saathi portal (www.sancharsaathi.gov.in) to empower citizens which, inter-alia, has the Chakshu facility to report suspected fraud communications & Unsolicited Commercial Communications (UCC). Based on the reports of suspected fraud communications, DoT acts on the mobile connections, mobile handsets, bulk SMS senders and WhatsApp accounts. UCC reports are sent to Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to act as per Telecom Commercial Communications Customer's Preference Regulations (TCCCPR-2018) of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

DoT and TSPs have developed Prevention of Spoofed Incoming International System to identify and block incoming international spoofed calls which display Indian mobile numbers and appear to be originating from within India. Such international spoofed calls have been made by cyber-criminals in recent cases of fake digital arrests, FedEx scams, and impersonation as government and police officials, etc. Further, following steps are taken by TRAI to address UCC:

i.   TCCCPR-2018 of TRAI has provisions where a telecom subscriber can opt to block all commercial communications or can selectively block commercial communications as per preference categories and register complaint against Senders of UCC through Mobile App, sending SMS to short code 1909 and calling on 1909.

ii.   Blacklisting of Registered Entities and Telemarketers for violation of TCCCPR-2018.

iii.   Action against Unregistered Telemarketer (UTM) such as giving a warning, putting them under Usage Cap or disconnecting in case of repeated violations.

iv.   Directives to disconnect all telecom resources of unregistered senders for making spam calls and to blacklist such Senders.

v.   Financial Disincentives (FDs) against the Access Providers for failing to curb UCC.

(d)   Based on the reports of citizens at Chakshu facility of Sanchar Saathi portal and further analysis, mobile connections have been disconnected, mobile handsets have been blocked, WhatsApp accounts have been disengaged and Principal entities, headers and SMS templates have been blacklisted.

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