

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 558
TO BE ANSWERED ON:07.02.2025

WEB SCRAPING FOR TRAINING AI MODELS

558. SHRI S NIRANJAN REDDY:

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

- (a) the measures in place to regulate and prevent the misuse of web scraping of publicly available user data by social media companies for training Artificial Intelligence (AI) models;
- (b) the manner in which Government is ensuring that social media companies provide full transparency and obtain informed user consent before scraping data; and
- (c) the accountability mechanisms that are in place to ensure that scraped user data is not used for unethical purposes by social media companies?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (c): The web scraping with respect to any publicly available user data by any intermediary including social media companies for training Artificial Intelligence (AI) models or for any other purpose is regulated under Information Technology Act, 2000 (“IT Act”) and its rules. Section 43 of IT Act provides penalty for unauthorised access to computer system and provides compensation for damages to affected parties. Additionally, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 obligates intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, to prevent users from hosting, displaying, uploading, or sharing content that violates any law and they have to implement measures to ensure data protection and prevent unauthorized data access. Also, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (“DPDP Act”) obligates organizations involved in digital personal data processing, including web scraping of publicly available user data, to implement robust compliance measures, including obtaining consent for specified purposes before lawful processing of digital personal data and respect for individual rights. Further, the DPDP Act establishes a robust framework of accountability mechanisms to ensure the lawful processing of digital personal data with Data Protection Board of India as an independent adjudicatory body empowered to investigate complaints, conduct inquiries, and impose penalties of up to ₹250 crore for non-compliance of the provisions of the Act.
