

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1397**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 27.12.2017

**OBJECTIONABLE CONTENT ON NET**

**1397 SHRI JANARDAN SINGH SIGRIWAL:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has directed any social networking/media sites to remove certain objectionable contents from their websites;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the number of such requests made to these sites during each of the last three years and the current year and their response thereto along with the details of web pages blocked by the Government recently and the reasons thereof;
- (c) the number of individuals booked in the country under section 66-A of the Information Technology Act during each of the last three years and the current year along with the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether there is any monitoring mechanism in place to regulate the contents posted on social networking sites; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by the Government to check the posting of objectionable contents on such sites?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI ALPHONS KANNANTHANAM)

(a) and (b): Section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any Computer Resource in the interest of Sovereignty and Integrity of India, Defence of India, Security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above. Government takes action under this section 69A of Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 for blocking of web-sites/Specific web-pages with objectionable contents, whenever requests are received from designated nodal officers or upon Court orders for blocking of web-sites / web-pages.

A total of 587, 964 and 1329 URLs of social media web-sites / specific web-pages were blocked in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 (upto 30th November 2017) respectively under section 69A through the committee constituted under the rules notified under section 69A of the IT Act 2000. Further, a total of 632, 100 and 83 URLs of social media web-sites/web-pages were blocked in compliance with the directions of the competent Courts of India in 2015, 2016 and 2017 (upto 30th November 2017) respectively.

(c): The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its Order dated 24.03.2015 in Shreya Singhal vs. UoI case has struck down section 66A of Information Technology Act 2000 in its entirety and therefore cannot be enforced. As per the data maintained by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a total of 2,423 persons in 2014 and 3,137 persons in 2015 were arrested under combined sections of 66 & 66A of IT Act. NCRB did not maintain data separately for section 66A. The data on section 66A of IT Act is not collected by NCRB since 2016 onwards.

(d) and (e): Government does not regulate content appearing on social networking sites. At present, law enforcement and security agencies make searches on the Internet on specific case-to-case basis or as appropriate.

The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions for removal of objectionable online content. Section 79 of the Act provides that intermediaries are required to disable/remove unlawful content on being notified by appropriate government or its agency. Further, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011 notified under section 79 of the IT Act requires that the Intermediaries 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 harmful, objectionable, affect minors and unlawful in any way.

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