

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.300**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 12.12.2018

**OBJECTIONABLE CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**300. 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 websites to remove certain objectionable contents from their websites;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the number of such requests made to these websites during each of the last three years and the current year and their response therein along with the details of web pages blocked by the Government recently and the reasons therefor;
- (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 S.S. AHLUWALIA)

(a) and (b): Yes, Sir. Section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 provides for blocking 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. The Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for blocking for Access of Information for Public) Rules 2009, notified under section 69A provides detailed process including checks-and-balances for blocking of information. The website/webpage is blocked following the due process prescribed in these Rules. The number of Social media URLs blocked / removed during the last 3 years under the provisions of rule 7 Section 69A of the IT Act 2000 are 587, 964, 1329 and 2388 for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 ( upto 31.12.2018) respectively. Further, Government orders for blocking/removal of specific URLs on social media platforms websites/webpages in compliance with the directions of the competent Courts of India.

(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 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 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. 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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