

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY

LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. *459

ANSWERED ON 3rd APRIL, 2023

Data Breaches in Ed-Tech Apps

*459. DR. T. SUMATHY (a) THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken cognizance of the report on data breaches in Education Technology (Ed-tech) applications in India released by a global Human Rights organization 'Human Rights Watch';
- (b) whether the Government has implemented any safeguards or plans to implement the same to address the issue of data breaches in Ed-tech apps;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore; and
- (d) the number of students and teachers enrolled on the DIKSHA app software, respectively?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 459 ASKED BY DR. T. SUMATHY (A) THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT REGARDING DATA BREACHES IN ED-TECH APPS.

(a) to (c) DIKSHA (<https://diksha.gov.in/>) an initiative of the Ministry of Education for digital online education, has QR coded textbooks and various specialized e-Contents for classes 1-12 and teachers in 36 languages. On DIKSHA, States and UTs have their own vertical along with those of NCERT, CBSE and NIOS. DIKSHA does not collect precise location data of the user, DIKSHA only gets approximate state and district information (based on device IP), which is stored in the system only after confirmation from the user and it is used to show the user curated content specific to the user's board/state. The IP address of the user is not stored. DIKSHA does not use any data for advertising, behavioral advertising, or other commercial purposes and it does not transmit any user data or information to Google Firebase. To address the concerns raised by some organizations, preventive action was already being taken on possibility of data breaches in EDTECH products. Indian Computer Emergency Response Team, **CERT-in**, is the organization keeping a watch on websites/ platforms of India and periodically reports possibilities of breach of data. Based on these reports adequate action is taken. The Ministry of Education has issued an "Advisory to Citizens Regarding Use of Caution against Ed-tech Companies" wherein do's and don'ts to be followed by the stakeholders of the education ecosystem have been issued. This advisory further indicates towards the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 notified by Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs) to spread awareness among the consumers about their rights and remedies. The advisory of this Ministry incorporates rules to be followed by these e-commerce entities in order to prevent untoward liability in the future. This advisory further suggests for e-commerce entities/Ed-tech companies to comply with the general rules of ASCI's Code for Self-Regulation in advertising, the advertisements of Educational Institutions including Ed-tech companies and Programs shall comply with the guidelines given in the advisory issued by the Ministry. The links to report any untoward incident have also been provided in this advisory. The advisory is available at the following link: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1784582>

(d) DIKSHA is used both for dissemination of e-contents (by students, teachers and other stakeholders) as well as for running various courses for teachers' Continuous Professional Development (CPD). All the States/UTs as well as central level organizations like NCERT, CBSE, NIOS can use DIKSHA as a tenant and upload e-content or run CPDs. DIKSHA contains 9,660 Courses, drawing a total of 16,83,03,869 course enrolments, of which there are 13,76,88,749 Course Completions. DIKSHA houses around 3.2 lakh e-contents uploaded by all the tenants. Since DIKSHA doesn't mandatorily ask users to login to access and consume e-contents, hence data about total number of students is not available. Till 29-3-2023, DIKSHA has witnessed 5,24,05,84,911 learning sessions spanning total 61,17,97,29,750 Minutes.
