

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 590
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.12.2023

REGULATION OF DARK NET

590. SHRI MANISH TEWARI:

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

- (a) whether the Government is cognizant of the existence of the Dark Net and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has formulated any policies, plans or laws to regulate or control access to the Dark Net and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is aware of the kind of content that is pervasive on the Dark Net and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has acknowledged that it is legally feasible, through browsers like Onion, to easily access the Dark Net and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government is aware of the prevalence of illicit activities such as global racketeering in child pornography, child trafficking, organized prostitution, narcotic sales and trade of banned products on the Dark Net and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) whether the Government is actively considering to participate in the establishment of an international legal framework to regulate, proscribe or subject the Dark Net to some form of legal and regulatory oversight, if so, the details in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a) to (f): The policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring that the Internet in India is Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable to all Digital Nagriks.

The Government is cognizant of the risks associated with new and evolving technologies on the Internet including Dark Net. The term "Dark Net" is used to denote a class of content on the Internet that is not visible through general browsing and not indexed by search engines. This has been intentionally hidden and is inaccessible through standard web browsers. Dark web sites serve as a platform for users for anonymity. The hidden eco system of the Dark web has potential of being used for malicious activities due to its inherent anonymous nature. Traditional search engines are prevented from indexing those web-pages by using techniques such as dynamic content, pages without back links (unlinked pages), sites requiring login, pages with limited access content etc. Dark web technologies such as The Onion Routing (TOR) provide restricted access as well as prevent monitoring through use of encryption.

The Government is also aware of potential illegal activities and crimes associated with the Dark Net.

Government is also cognizant of the issues in cyberspace and takes suitable steps on an ongoing basis. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology issues blocking directions to block the information available on the Internet for public access under section 69A of the Information Technology Act 2000 under specific conditions i.e., in the interest of : (i) sovereignty and integrity of India, (ii) defense of India, (iii) security of the State, (iv) friendly relations with foreign States or (v) public order or (vi) for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offense relating to above, following due process as envisaged in the Information Technology (Procedure Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.
