

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 541
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.09.2020

UNAUTHENTICATED NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

541. SHRI ANIL FIROJIYA :

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

- (a) whether Government has taken any step to ensure a sense of responsibility among electronic and social media companies to prevent broadcasting of several unauthenticated news in the country which may spread panic;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor??

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATES FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)

(a) to (c): Cyber space is a complex environment of people, software, hardware and services on the Internet. With a borderless cyberspace coupled with the possibility of instant communication and anonymity, the potential for misuse of cyberspace and social media platforms for criminal activities is a global issue. There are media reports about social media platforms being misused to spread several unauthenticated news in the country which may spread panic on social media sites.

The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions for removal of objectionable online content. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011 require that the intermediaries, which also includes social media platforms, 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, and unlawful in any way. Also, 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, under the provisions of section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 Government blocks 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.
