

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1546
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 10-02-2021

PRIVACY POLICY OF WHATSAPP

1546. SHRI RAVIKUMAR D.:

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to intervene in the issue of modified privacy policy of WhatsApp and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) the measures taken by the Government to prevent social media companies like facebook, twitter and WhatsApp from misusing the personal data of the citizens of this country; and
- (c) whether the Government has proposed to ban these apps and encourage indigenous app and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a): Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) took cognizance of the WhatsApp announcement of its new Privacy Policy stated to be applicable to Indian users from February 2021. To safeguard the interest of Indian users, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has asked WhatsApp to review the proposed privacy policy changes and also to explain the rationale of the same.

(b): Section 43A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 provides for safeguards for sensitive personal information collected by a body corporate including social media platforms.

The social media platforms including WhatsApp, for the user generated content made available on their platforms, are intermediaries as defined in the Information Technology Act, 2000. Accordingly, these platforms have to observe due diligence prescribed by the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules, 2011 notified under section 79 of IT Act, 2000.

Government has already moved the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 in Parliament which is presently under the consideration of the Joint Committee of Parliament. The Bill provides for safeguards of privacy and interests of the Indian citizens.

(c): There is no proposal with MeitY to block apps like WhatsApp. From time to time, the government of India launches apps for citizens to promote its Digital India initiative. MeitY, in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission of Niti Aayog, launched Digital India Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge to identify the best Indian Apps that are already being used by citizens and have the potential to scale and become world class Apps in their respective categories..
