

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3630
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 17.03.2021

MISLEADING INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

3630. SHRIMATI SHARDABEN ANILBHAIPATEL:

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

- (a) whether several neighbouring countries and their media and social media are indulging in misleading and incorrect propaganda about the policies and actions of our Government and if so, the details thereof and there action of the Government thereto;
- (b) the steps being taken by the Government to provide reliable information on such policies and actions; and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to prevent people from falling prey to the campaigns by several neighbouring countries under which misleading and false information is provided?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE 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 misleading and incorrect propaganda is a global issue. The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions for removal of objectionable online content. Section 79 of the Act provides that intermediaries including social media platforms are required to disable/remove unlawful content relating to Article 19(2) of the Constitution, on being notified by appropriate government or its agency or through a court order. In order to provide enhanced user safety as also accountability of digital media platforms, Government has released the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified under the Act. Content which is prohibited under any law for the time being in force shall not be published or transmitted.

Also, section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 empowers Government to block 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. When brought to the knowledge of Government, Government has taken action on such social media accounts and specific information falling within the scope of section 69A of the Act.

Further, Government has set up a portal **india.gov.in** to disseminate trustworthy Government policies and activities. The Portal provides a single window access to the information and services being provided by the Indian Government for citizens and other stakeholders. The Portal endeavours to provide comprehensive, accurate, reliable and one-stop source of information about India and its various facets and links to other Indian Government Portals/websites, which are also working on “**gov.in**” domain.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has set up a dedicated cell (Counter Misinformation Unit) under Press Information Bureau (PIB) as a measure to counter fake news on policies, schemes, programs etc. by

Government of India. The Unit has a presence on prominent social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The unit takes *suo moto* cognizance of fake news going viral on social media and also on basis of outside complaints.
