

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION 2800
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2021

DIGITAL SECURITY OF CITIZENS

2800. SHRI ABDUL KHALEQUE:

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

- (a) whether the Government has any proposal to ensure digital security of citizens especially women and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of the orders which have been given to social media platforms to withdraw content that hinders the digital security of citizens;
- (c) whether the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Women and Child Development have consulted together on the issues of social media platforms; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a): The Government is committed to Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable internet. All online intermediaries providing services in India shall respect the Constitutional rights of all Indian online specially under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India.

Government has taken several steps for digital security of people that *inter alia*, include:

- (i) The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions to deal with prevalent cyber crimes including the ones related to women. Sections 66E, 67 and 67A of the Act provide for the punishment and fine for violation of bodily privacy and publishing or transmitting of obscene/sexually-explicit material in electronic form. Section 67B of the Act specifically provides stringent punishment for publishing, browsing or transmitting child pornography in electronic form. Further, sections 354C and 354D of Indian Penal Code provide punishment for cyber bullying and cyber stalking.
- (ii) The recently notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified under the IT Act particularly deal with citizen safety especially for women and children. The IT Rules require that the intermediaries shall observe due diligence

while discharging their duties and shall inform their users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful, defamatory, obscene and invasive of another's privacy or otherwise unlawful in any manner whatsoever. The intermediary shall also adopt grievance redressal mechanism as prescribed in the Rules. Also, as per provisions of rule 3(2)(b) of these Rules, the intermediary shall remove any such objectionable content against women within twenty-four hours from the receipt of complaint made by the individual impacted person or any person on his behalf.

Intermediaries are also required to remove any unlawful content relatable to Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India or violative of any law for the time being in force as and when brought to their knowledge either through a court order or through a notice by appropriate government or its agency.

(iv) Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) operates a National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, www.cybercrime.gov.in to enable citizens to report complaints pertaining to all types of cyber crimes with special focus on cyber crimes against women and children.

(v) MeitY through a programme, namely, Information Security Education & Awareness (ISEA), has been creating awareness among users highlighting the importance of following the ethics while using Internet and advising them not to share rumours/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) provides relevant awareness material.

(vi) Besides conducting training and awareness workshop including those exclusively for women, ISEA has published an exclusive handbook namely 'Information Security Awareness handbook for Women', 'Cyber Security tips for Women' and 'Online Safety tips for Women @ Home during COVID 19'. The awareness content designed/developed exclusively for women have been made available for download on the website <https://www.infosecawareness.in/women>.

(b): The Appropriate Governments and their agencies in States and in Centre take legal action against the cyber-crime offenders as per the provisions of applicable laws and also issue notices to intermediaries including social media platforms to remove content violative of any law. This Ministry does not maintain such data.

(c) and (d): This Ministry regularly interacts with Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Women and Child Development on many issues including matters related to unlawful or content having misinformation on the social media platforms.
